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Stephen Miller: Mugwumps Today

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Douglas J. Feith: Radical Sheiks

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• February 9 to March 6. The hair curls. The palms begin to sweat. Premonitory messages of a return to years of sleepless nights are felt. I am a member of the constituency of conscience. I am a progressive, a reader of newsletters, a member of *ad hoc* committees, a contributor to causes, and I know that it is no accident that Richard Milhous Nixon moved to New York in February. When he got on that airplane he knew what he was doing. But do we know what he is doing? That is the question now reposing in the minds of my fellows, and, as it reposes, sometimes it wets the brain.

• Ronald Reagan stalks the land. Teddy campaigns in an existential void, dated spring 1970; and I am left monitoring news reports from National Public Radio, while unanswered fund appeals from Barry Commoner's Citizens' Party pile up. Am I for a national youth registration? Only if it is committed to good works! But what if women yearn for combat? Well, perhaps if we were finally to go to war with Chile. And what is the position on Jimmy? How can he keep missing the signals from Moscow? Russia's trade union daily, *Trud*, has just announced the opening of two Moscow pizza parlors. Clearly, Mr. Brezhnev does not want war. It would play right into the hands of the Fortune 500. The oil companies are my enemy. The cities are going to explode. There is rage in the powder rooms of America. Jimmy Carter has deceived me. When he wore work shirts and Levis in 1976 he was not sincere. I shall vote for Anderson of Illinois! He is the candidate of seemly sentiment! And now back to my therapy group.

• • •

• Meanwhile in Washington, the Wonderboy, now a bit wan and wrinkled, pitches himself into the world's problems. Inflation has hit an annual rate of 18.2 percent. The prime rate is at its highest since the Civil War. Gold is selling for over $625, and the dollar is sent get-well cards from international bankers. In Cuba, the infamous Soviet brigade has resumed maneuvers, according to the State Department. In Afghanistan the Russians are taking fearful punishment, according to Western journalists covering the slaughter from the cafés of Pakistan. Fifty-three American nationals remain the prisoners of the dirty-necked mullahs of Iran. The American Ambassador to Colombia has been taken hostage. And Jimmy grows even more concerned. He is easily the most concerned President of all time. Has the world ever seen the likes? In Johannesburg, South Africa, a 35-year-old woman was beaten and robbed while trying to commit suicide.

• In early March Western journalists were summoned to a mystery spot in northern Cambodia where Prime Minister Khieu Samphan and Deputy Prime Minister Ieng Sary of the deposed Pol Pot regime, both dressed in business suits, suavely confessed that Pol Pot had made some policy mistakes. The fellows sought understanding. After all, as the Prime Minister allowed, "Everybody has a past." They sought aid. They spoke of a global "domino theory" of Soviet conquest. "Our main duty is not to make the socialist revolution or build socialism," the fellows asserted; and from Beverly Hills to Georgetown the fires of idealism cooled. Tom and Jane took the news especially hard. And in Mineola, New York, Mrs. Ursula Beckley has filed suit against the Dairy Barn Stores, contending that a six-inch, grayish-black snake crawled out of an egg she had purchased from one of the chain's stores.

• A prize for passive solar house design has been conferred by the Department of Housing and Urban Development on Mr. Donald Finkel, whose entry was a solar doghouse. A 375-pound inmate continues to terrorize correctional officials in New York, breaking many noses and spilling much blood, despite the fact that he has been examined by shrinks, transferred to Bellevue Hospital, and fêted with a small birthday party by armed guards wearing chest protectors. Mrs. Mary Bates of Marshall, Michigan, has filed a $1 million damage suit against a casket firm and a funeral parlor, charging that shoddy workmanship caused her husband's mortal remains to fall through the casket's bottom and be trampled upon as it was being borne to its grave site. Yet there is also cause to rejoice. In New York City, Dr. Leo Wollman is practically singing the news that one of his patients, a 40-year-old man, has successfully breast-fed his daughter, aided solely by sex hormones. Moreover, Dr. Wollman reports that he has personally tasted the milk, and, though slightly different from female milk, it is clinically safe and nutritious.

• American purchasers of 1979 domestic and foreign automobiles seemed to take the news calmly when the Department of Transportation announced that most of its 1979 test cars had failed head-on tests at 35 miles-per-hour. Still, the news greatly vexed Miss Joan Claybrook of the Highway Traffic Safety Administration, who apparently speaks for the nation's drunk drivers and homicidal maniacs. English purchasers of dachshunds received similar news regarding the crashworthiness of their pets when it was divulged in a Knutsford, Cheshire, court that Mrs. Vera Moss's dachshund failed to survive its test against a stationary barrier. Mrs. Moss's dog was propelled by Mr. Peter Bennett, who held it by the back right leg as he repeatedly bashed it against a garden wall. He was fined; the Department of Transportation got off scot-free.

• Maryland's House of Delegates passed a bill exempting manure from state property tax. A pretender to the Afghan throne has been found selling shirts at Bergdorf Goodman. And in far-off Tokyo, American idealism and honor are being defended by two remarkable Yanks, Mr. Dexter Cate of the Hawaii-based Fund for Animals and Mr. Norman Hastings, a U.S. Consular officer with a conscience. Mr. Cate was arrested in late February for cutting the nets of Japanese fishermen and freeing some 200 dolphins. He had tried to enter into dialogue with the fishermen, who refer to dolphins as "gangsters of the sea," and to elucidate his position that "dolphins should have rights similar to human rights." Yet the fishermen responded only with inscrutable oriental gesticulations and lawsuits—a chilling response, that, and so Mr. Hastings is setting things straight: "We are obligated to see Mr. Cate's human right is protected and not discriminated against under Japanese law." What a fury Mr. Hastings would be in Teheran. Yet let us remember that not even the Iranians so cruelly abuse the dolphins as these greedy Japanese!

• And meanwhile in Teheran the singularity of the Iranian revolution grows ever more manifest. It is no less than the precursor of a new era in international relations, an era in which power and prominence correlate not with the size of one's army or national treasury but rather with the number of hostages a nation can sock away in its national hoosegow. Allah never notified the Shah of the power that accrues to the international kidnapper. This revelation he granted only to the Rev. Khomeini, D.D., B.P.O.E. The government of Iran has been handed over to a gang of low-grade graduate students drawn from the universities of Europe and America, where they once slept through classes and terrorized coeds, yet Iran remains inviolable, thanks to its arsenal of hostages. Were the Rev. Khomeini's galoots to invade a few more embassies, Iran might become a superpower.

• When the American hostages are viewed from this perspective it becomes clear that in demanding their release we go too far. Look at it from the Iranian point of view. These hostages are fundamental components of Iranian security. To demand their release is to demand of Iran something on the order of unilateral disarmament.

• Meanwhile the Wonderboy remains in voluntary confinement in the White House. He grows even more austere. He has put aside his threats and sanctions. He now sends the Iranians hints of affection and promises of eventual U.S. aid and commerce. What gives? Psychologists are familiar with a condition they call the Stockholm Syndrome, wherein ex-hostages come to the defense of their captors. Some develop deep feelings for their tormentors; some marry them.

• Jimmy is the first man ever to suffer the Stockholm Syndrome without actually having been taken hostage. I do not expect him to forsake Rosalynn for an Iranian militant, but it is apparent that he is not apt to do harm to his Iranian tormentors. His is a sad case. —*RET*

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EDITORIAL

THE MARION STONEHEAD REDEEMED

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

I wonder whose idea it was to send Mr. Muhammad Ali, Esq., as presidential envoy to explain American foreign policy to African heads of state. The story has been chastely banished from the headlines, but we scholars must not flinch from such episodes. Let the others avert their eyes. We shall ponder the travesty and be improved by it.

If the idea did not have the authentic savor of our President's populist whoop whoop, I would have laid the ensuing opéra bouffe to the mischievous designs of Donald Segretti or the Bulgarian secret police. Possibly there was a drunk loose late at night in the State Department's operations center. Perchance, Ham's bartender had a hand in it. But no, this is the administration that has unveiled such inimitable bladder scenes as Dr. Peter Bourne, Bert Lance, the Hon. Andrew Young, B.D., Midge Costanza, Ham, Jody, Billy—halt! the room begins to spin. No President in history has been so closely associated with a barrel full of monkeys. Somewhere in the wilds of Ohio the descendants of Warren Gamaliel Harding rejoice. The Marion stonehead is redeemed.

A retired pugilist with a penchant for hallucinating in public—make him our Clark Clifford for Africa! Here is Carterism with its grinning face. Imagine, there he was in Africa, Howard Cosell's legendary heavyweight champion of the world—an agglutination of Plato, Hercules, and St. Theresa of the Little Flower—and what happens to him? He is rendered schizo when interviewed at the Dar es Salaam airport by a handful of Tanzanian Dan Rathers. Would Joe Frazier ever have writhed so pathetically? Of course not, but then Joe Frazier was always a man of dignity. In the 1960s and 1970s this always put him at a PR disadvantage when he confronted Ali.

Think of what the Carter White House pulled this time! Our government actually sent a plane to snatch Ambassador Ali up from a remote sparring session somewhere in metropolitan Madras, where some disappointed stringers for Western news services were stuck with him: he aging gracelessly, they praying for a newsworthy moment. Then came the news that Ali was to be made a diplomatist. Suddenly it was 1971 again. The stringers perked up. The champion perked up. Once again he was The Greatest, and off the entourage went to the Dark Continent.

The thing was a piece of populist cleverness, until sometime on February 3 when word began to spread through the Carter White House: Our 250-pound Richelieu has run amuck at the Dar es Salaam airport, *and there is nothing we can do about it—Not Even An Entebbe-Style Raid!* Our foreign service officers try to stifle him, but he gibbers on. They try to assist him with the questions, but he grows irritable. There is no chance he will go home early, and he has already called President Brezhnev one of the "two baddest white men in the world." How will Secretary Vance ever explain that one to the Politburo?

Well, whose masterpiece was this? Was it the work of Patt Derian, Richard Holbrooke, C. William Maynes, or Richard Moose? All are Assistant Secretaries of State, and all are capable of such marvels. How about Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs David Aaron, Special Advisor to the Secretary of State Marshall Shulman, or Director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff W. Anthony Lake? Come on boys, break from your meditations on ways to reassure the Soviets of our peaceful intentions. (How about lavender uniforms for the 82nd Airborne? Could we turn the dishes of our early warning radar system into solar collectors? Let's replace the stars on our bombers with flowers. Hey, we could commission Salvador Dali!)

What I want to know is which of you beauties decided to send Ambassador Ali to visit the presidential palaces of Africa? I know all about your incomparable understanding of and respect for the Third World, but what did you expect President Nyerere to say when Ambassador Ali ropea-doped into his office? What could a man who failed his military intelligence test say to this graduate of Edinburgh University? Of course Ali will always have a very special meaning for you children of the 1960s, but Woodstock, Simon and Garfunkel, Peter Max, and strobe lights do not have the same resonance in Africa and other foreign lands.

It was patronizing to send Muhammad Ali to Africa. And, remembering Ali's eccentricities, it was reckless. We sent high-level presidential advisors to India and Pakistan. Why send a retired boxer to Africa? 'Twas a botch. Yet when the administration began congratulating itself on this botch ("The impact he's having is tremendous," said Hodding Carter III), the thing took on an even more pernicious dimension.

In a democratic society much of what the average citizen knows about government comes from examples set by his elected officials. To solemnly assert things that are not true, i.e., that the Ali mission was successful and intelligent, is to further degrade many a citizen's understanding

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of international relations and of those who practice international relations. Our President, the one who was once given to saying "If I ever lie to you, don't vote for me," could serve the commonweal well by asking his aides to stop lying about this ignominious pratfall.

And a final point. Is it not about time for him to dismiss the aforementioned Machiavellis? Last summer he dismissed his four most competent cabinet members to demonstrate a new seriousness in his domestic policy. Now he implies there is a new seriousness in his foreign policy. How about dismissing some of those who made such a hash of it in years past? The nation's sports fans will be grateful. □

CAPITOL IDEAS

THE SOVIET SPHERE OF INFLUENZA

by Tom Bethell

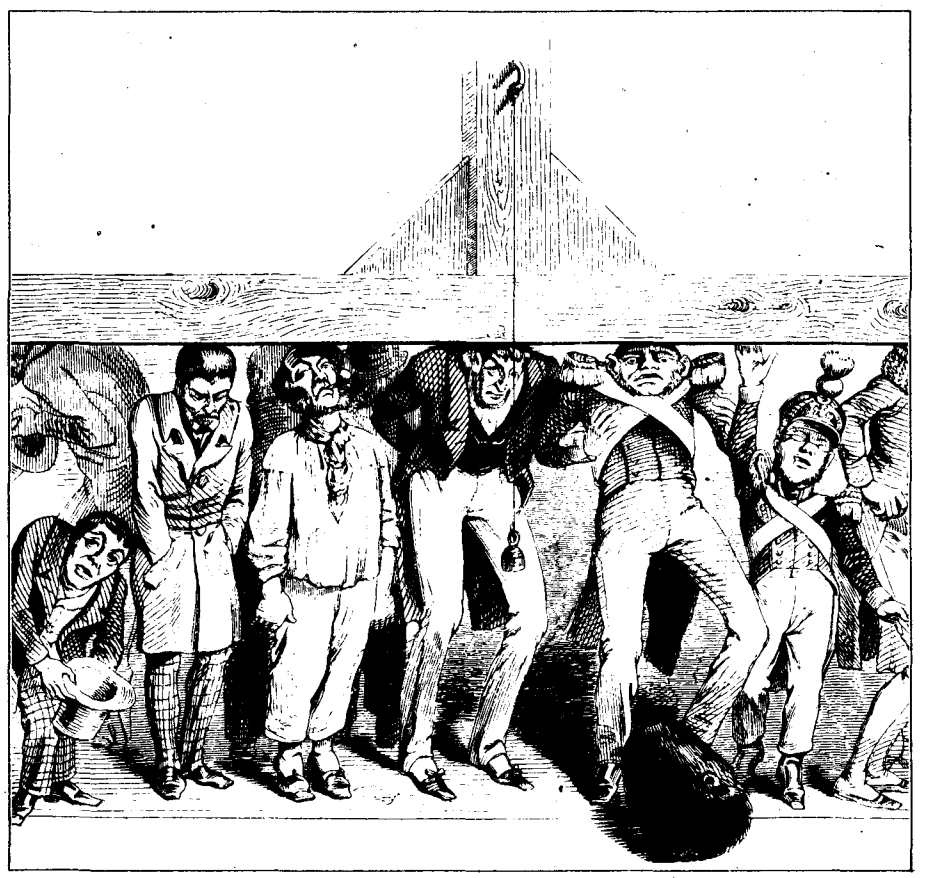
An unexpected bonus deriving from the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, not to mention the oppression of the Russians themselves, has been the westward migration of some of the residents of these countries—those who were fortunate enough to escape—and a corresponding shot in the arm for intelligent opinion here. I find myself much in agreement with such Slavs and Russian emigrés as I occasionally meet. They often have quite original minds and, needless to say, are a refreshing contrast to our own wilted weeds, homegrown at St. Grottlesex.

I'm afraid the problem is that our local flora are "coming down with something"; in a word, ailing, like the Ayatollah. By contrast the Eastern Europeans have already been exposed to the germ and either resisted it or caught a mild case of the illness. As a result, they are now "inoculated" against its further ravages.

This disease, called egalitarianism (a virulent strain of the more general disorder, socialism) is currently galloping across the American continent, north and south, at a fearful speed. That is why the Soviet Empire, for all its horrors, strikes me as being basically in better health than the West. The Soviet-dominated lands have indeed been laid low by the invading microbial armies, but somehow the disease never quite "took," by some miracle. So now they (I sense) are on the road back to health. We, on the other hand, have only just begun to feel the first flush of fever.

Meanwhile, it occurs to me that Ben Wattenberg and others roosting comfortably at centrist think tanks could do us all a great favor by stanching the flow of those articles and commentaries which, by saying that America is "moving to the right," play into the hands of the National Education Association, Ralph Nader, Americans for Democratic Action, and other left-wing institutions (who use these articles as press releases, if I'm not mistaken). Far from moving to the right, America has been moving steadily to the left for the past ten years at least. This has not been noticed because conservative opinion has been effectively labelled as "ideology," whereas left-wing opinion now marches about the land in the guise of reasonableness, status quo, and conventional wisdom.

It is perfectly true that the rapid onset of the egalitarian illness has summoned forth from the body politic a number of *antibodies*, but it would be a great mistake to interpret the appearance of antibodies as a sign of national health. They are a reaction to illness.



Well, I won't go on about this right now. I'll save a fuller discussion of the subject for the future.

This month I wanted to say something about my favorite Slavs (come to think of it, I'm not sure that is the right word, and now I worry that I might be hauled up before some Ethnic Tribunal). At any rate, I am sure that Lev Navrozov won't object if I describe him as a Caucasian, since he came to the U.S. several years ago from Russia (perhaps somewhere near the Caucasus Mountains). He is described sometimes as a "dissident Soviet writer," although he might object to that use of "Soviet." He is also the author of *The Education of Lev Navrozov,* a book I have not so much as glimpsed in any bookstore, new or secondhand.

But I have much enjoyed several of Navrozov's articles in magazines such as *Commentary.* He must be the only writer in America capable of writing about such topics as SALT verification and CIA estimates of Soviet military strength in such a way as to be not only readable but actually funny.

So I was pleased to be able to hear him speak at a recent conference held in Washington by Accuracy In Media. As I came in, Navrozov was telling a story about an airliner that

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crashed near his home in the Soviet Union. The authorities simply came in the middle of the night, bulldozed a great mound of earth over the crashed plane, and turfed it over and sprinkled water on the sod—all before the citizens were up and about the next day. Nothing appeared in the paper, of course. What would "the story" have been, anyway—"New Hill in Omsk"? This renders rather far-fetched the claims of those who say that Afghanistan will be the Soviets' Vietnam ("Vietnam" is here understood to mean the turning of public opinion against the government through the arousal of conscience).

Navrozov then made the comment that by contrast the U.S. news media's vision of the world was similar to that of a frog. "The world is a kind of a blur as long as everything is still," he said. "They need some movement, some sensation." Anything that moves then comes sharply into focus. Someone in the audience asked a question about a counter-demonstration that "provided the necessary movement, but still was not covered by the press."

"Yes, well this is a more complicated business," Navrozov said. "I didn't have time to go into it fully. I should have said a left-wing frog."

I was also pleased to meet Leopold Tyrmand at the conference. Tyrmand came to this country from Poland in the 1960s and for a brief, heady moment after he arrived wrote for the *New Yorker,* before that once-admirable journal went soft in the head (caught the egalitarian flu, one is inclined to say). Tyrmand, by then suspected of pro-Americanism, was in a manner of speaking banished from the Eastern (Liberal) Seaboard (much as Russian dissidents are sent to Gorky). Eventually he took up residence in Illinois, and currently he is the editor of an interesting, even controversial, publication called *Chronicles of Culture.**

This journal, primarily a compilation of book reviews, is sometimes marred by an excessive flailing away at the idiocies of liberalism, when a more indirect approach might be more effective. But on the whole Tyrmand and his contributors do a good job of examining the cultural assumptions and biases underlying current writing. If you haven't seen *Chronicles,* it's worth a look because it is such a refreshing change from the normal diet of humanist cellulose.

Finally, it was my rare pleasure to meet at the same gathering Dr. Petr Beckmann, professor of electrical engineering at the University of Colorado, who came to the U.S. from Czechoslovakia in 1963. Beckmann puts out (independent of the university) an excellent monthly newsletter called *Access to Energy,* which he describes as being "pro-science, pro-technology, pro-free enterprise." I recommend this excellent newsletter to anyone interested in the (crucial) connection between energy problems and market forces, a connection which many government officials, politicians, anti-business lobbyists, and journalists have not understood (or have pretended not to), which is the main reason why we've ended up with an energy crisis. Over and over again, with respect to different sources of energy, Beckmann spells out the economic determinants of energy supply. How extraordinary, really, that such a task should devolve upon an immigrant Czech engineer.

Where, one wonders, have our own expensively educated St. Grottlesex weeds been while Dr. Beckmann has been getting off the boat and going through the laborious business of acquainting himself with a new continent? *They*, of course, are the ones who have been doing their best to suspend the operation of market forces in the realm of energy. It is above all the cultivated disdain for "trade" among the educated classes that is responsible for the U.S. plunging headlong into the statist quagmire.

The great weakness of capitalism, evidently, is that it does not inspire the allegiance of those who have benefitted from it (by inheriting money, being sent to the best schools). On the other hand, capitalism is nearly always supported by those with the prospect of benefitting from it. They correctly perceive that capitalism is the most effective of all social elevators. This is because they have grasped the basic truth: ***money doesn't mind who spends it.*** The upper classes understand this, too, which is why they are perennially so scornful (read: apprehensive) of the upwardly mobile. Hence, their denigration of the mechanism of mobility: the market.

Here we encounter the widely ignored paradox of class. According to Marxist and subsequent analysis, capitalism is supposed to result in a class system, meaning a society separated into layers that are difficult to bridge. But the truth is that capitalism is the most socially fluid of all systems. This is because, despite the advantages of inherited wealth and privilege that capitalism undoubtedly confers, the human psyche is constituted in such a way that the retention of such privilege through more than a generation or so is an extremely difficult matter. If you don't believe me, keep an eye on the younger generation of Kennedys now making their way into the world. Their grandfather at least had the drive to accumulate a fortune. If his grandchildren do anything other than dissipate it, I shall be much surprised.

Socialist systems, on the other hand, turn out to have precisely the social rigidity that the Marxists profess to despise. Let me quote a paragraph from a recent article about Eastern Europe by George Schopflin in the London *Times:*

> Communist parties are ostensibly committed to social equality and to advancing the interests of the proletariat. In their first decade of rule, the parties did, in fact, effect a great social transformation as they promoted a new generation of intellectuals, officeholders and managers. But, as Dr. Walter Connor demonstrates in his book, *Socialism, Politics and Equality* (Columbia University Press), since then eastern Europe has become so rigidly stratified that the chances of someone from the peasantry or the working class moving into the intelligentsia are virtually nil.

This brings me to the other issue that I had hoped to discuss: What attracts intellectuals to socialism? It is, of course, one of the great questions posed by the twentieth century. But I am rapidly running out of space and so must leave it also for another time. But let me conclude by saying that Petr Beckmann has devoted one of his "different drummer" booklets to a discussion of precisely this subject. His conclusion strikes me as being the simple truth, and I have never seen it so well expressed. Capitalism, a system based on voluntary transactions, mercilessly exposes "the lack of need for the products and services offered by intellectuals, which are often quite simply not good enough to be attractive to voluntary choice." Hence the intellectuals' preference for a system under which people can be coerced into paying for things that they neither want nor need. □

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Stephen Miller

THE DOGMAS OF THE MODERN-DAY MUGWUMPS

After ten years of devotion to the "public interest," Common Cause marches ever onward to the Land of Perfect Reform.

When John Gardner founded Common Cause in the summer of 1970, he was very much aware of the weaknesses of previous reform movements. Although Common Cause announced that it would be "a third force in American life which would uphold the public interest against all comers—particularly the special interests that dominate our national life today," Gardner decided it would do so by employing skilled lobbyists who knew their way around Capitol Hill. In other words, although its appeal would be primarily populist in nature, it would use "techniques of professional organizing and lobbying" that reformers in the past had abjured.

Gardner's prescription for reform was a success. In less than four years Common Cause became one of the biggest, best organized, and best financed lobbies in Washington—second only in influence, according to one study, to the AFL-CIO. Its membership reached 100,000 people after 23 weeks and swelled to 324,000 after three years. Perhaps the most influential reform movement in history, Common Cause, as one writer has said, has over the last decade "written an uncommon success story," playing a major role in the passage of several "good government" laws.

From the beginning, Gardner agreed with E.L. Godkin, his Mugwump forebear, that "the diminution of political corruption is the great question of our time." "The nation is hurt," Gardner said, "when great decisions are made by venal men, concerned chiefly with private gain." Gardner's preoccupation with corruption led him to advocate that Common Cause focus on "structure and process" issues, that is to say, lobby for laws that would "go far toward eliminating the corrupting influence of money and secrecy in our public life."

For Common Cause, eliminating the "corrupting influence of money and secrecy" has always meant reducing what it calls the "raw power" of the special interests. In 1970 Common Cause said that it would take on the special interests; in 1979 Gardner and David Cohen, the president of Common Cause, spoke of the "Special Interest State." Special interests are blamed for the lack of an energy policy, for the high rate of inflation—blamed even for the erosion in American support for Israel. The point of these attacks is clear: Disinterested citizens know what mix of policies is in the public interest, but powerful special interests are blocking the enactment of these policies. By lobbying for laws that reduce the power of special interests, the problems that beset the American polity can be resolved. According to both Gardner and Cohen, "process determines substance."

This is why Common Cause has continually focused on such "structure and process" issues. In 1970 it lobbied against the seniority system in Congress and for public financing of elections; in 1979, when it registered with Congress as a "citizens lobby," the first two issues it listed as its "legislative interest" were open government and campaign financing. On such issues, Common Cause has been an influential force for change. According to the *Congressional Quarterly,* Common Cause is "credited with a major role in the enactment of the 1974 campaign finance law, with helping to develop public pressure for House and Senate reforms, and with aiding pending 'governing in the sunshine' legislation."

As Common Cause's first decade comes to an end, it is worth speculating about the effect Common Cause has had on the American political system: the effect of its rhetoric—the language it uses to engage in political debate—and the effect of the changes it has lobbied for.

Three quotations will suffice to describe the way in which Common Cause engages in political debate. Urging the passage of a bill to provide federal financing of congressional campaigns, Gardner said: "This is a historic opportunity for members of the House of Representatives to rise above self-interest." Commenting on the House Administration Committee's decision not to report a bill to provide federal funding for House general election campaigns, Michael Cole (Common Cause's legislative director) said that their action is "a legacy of the Wayne Hays era—a group of people who have resisted reform." Commenting on changes that restrict a congressman's outside income and require the disclosure of his financial assets, Fred Wertheimer, Common Cause's senior vice-president, said that "these reforms amount to a fundamental change in the way these people do business. They now face a choice. If they want to make a fortune, Congress is not necessarily the place to be any more." Common Cause continually implies that those who question its recommendations do so only for narrowly self-interested reasons.

At times Common Cause seems to back away from such a self-righteous stance.

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"We are a citizen's lobby, a public interest group," Cohen has said. "The difference between 'a' and 'the' is very important. We don't define 'the public interest' in the sense that one group represents it while others don't." And Gardner has said that "no citizens' movement should assume that it has some divinely inspired grasp of what is 'in the public interest.' It must have the courage of its convictions, but it must present those convictions in the public forum where all other groups can debate their validity."

Yet how can "all other groups debate their validity" when Common Cause says that those who do so are venal and unprincipled men? Common Cause's attacks put many congressmen on the defensive. They know that the general public holds Congress in little esteem, and they worry that voters may think them corrupt if they don't support Common Cause's recommendations. In such an atmosphere it is difficult for legislators to deliberate, to weigh the advantages of a particular policy against the disadvantages. In *Federalist* 1, Publius (the pseudonym under which Hamilton, Madison, and Jay wrote *The Federalist*) warns that "we are not always sure that those who advocate the truth are influenced by purer principle than their antagonists. Ambition, avarice, personal animosity, party opposition, and many other motives not more laudable than these, are apt to operate as well upon those who support as those who oppose the right side of the question." There is no clear relation, Publius implies, between pure motive and prudent policy. Common Cause, however, equates its own purity of principle with advocating the truth. Writing about the 1976 presidential campaign, Gardner said: "Message to candidates: No rhetoric." No rhetoric, of course, is an impossibility: Rhetoric is an essential element of all forms of civil discourse. But the rhetoric of Common Cause is inappropriate to deliberation, for it is a rhetoric of declamation, not deliberation, a rhetoric that impugns the motives of the opposition.

Common Cause is not necessarily on the right side of any question, but neither is it necessarily on the wrong side. Whether the changes—a more neutral word than reforms—advocated by Common Cause have made government work better is a matter of some controversy. Some observers and politicians have become disenchanted with many of these changes, but the position of Common Cause has remained the same: Money and secrecy are corrupting the political process, corrupting it even though so many "good government" laws have been passed. More changes are needed, Common Cause says, to bring an end to the Special Interest State. As Wertheimer said at a congressional hearing on legislation to provide partial public financing of House campaigns: "We are questioning the role of campaign money as used by special interests in the lobbying process and in the political process." And Gardner has said that "openness ranks second to the rule of law as a necessary ingredient of self-government."

Common Cause has worked hard to prove that money corrupts the political process. In a recent pamphlet, *How Money Talks in Congress,* Common Cause says there is a clear correlation between the way some congressmen voted on certain bills and the campaign contributions they received. Common Cause claims, for example, that a bill to control skyrocketing hospital costs was defeated in committee by one vote because the American Medical Association, the principal opponent of the bill, had given a total of $101,259 to the committee's members since 1975. "Thus," Common Cause concludes, "it was to the powerful AMA, *not* the public, that the committee majority wound up giving their allegiance."

Campaign contributions, the pamphlet claims, have affected the course of numerous bills; and the situation is getting worse, for special interests are more powerful than ever before, owing to the growth of political action committees (PACs), especially corporate political action committees. In 1974, there were 89 corporate PACs, which contributed $2.5 million to congressional campaigns, whereas in 1978 there were 646 corporate PACs, which contributed $8.8 million. But Common Cause is not only concerned about the growth of corporate PACs; it is concerned about the growth of PACs in general. In 1974 PACs contributed $12.5 million to congressional campaigns, whereas in 1978 they contributed $32 million.

Some legislators agree with Common Cause. Rep. Millicent Fenwick of New Jersey said that "in my mind there is no question that there is a connection between these contributions and votes. I have sought votes, and members have told me they received such-and-such an amount of money from one of these groups and they could not vote with me." Senator Kennedy has called the 96th Congress "the best Congress money can buy," a remark that is very similar to Gardner's comment that "the money-heavy special interests couldn't buy themselves a President so they tried to buy as many members of Congress as they could."

Many legislators, however, do not think that special interests are so influential. Rep. Jonathan Bingham of New York has said of the 96th Congress, "I don't think there is more than the usual degree of responsiveness to special interests this year." And Rep. Bill Frenzel of Minnesota, in an article attacking a bill to limit the influence of PACs—a bill supported by Common Cause—said that "none of the bill's supporters has been able to identify any House member who has been unduly influenced by any interest, nor have they shown that PAC contributions are a greater ... influence than editorials, direct lobbying, demonstrations or independent expenditures."

Of course, PACs—corporate or otherwise—would like to influence the course of legislation. But it is doubtful that their campaign contributions, which are perfectly legal, affect the way many congressmen vote. The figures Common Cause cites are misleading. Although in 1978 PACs gave more money than they gave in previous campaigns, the PAC contributions did not grow when viewed as a percentage of the whole. Contributions from all sources have increased, for campaigns generally have become more expensive. Thus the percentage of support any one PAC provides for a candidate's campaign has remained constant. In the 1978 election, few candidates received more than 5 percent of their campaign expenses from any one PAC or group of related PACs. The average gift from a single corporate committee was less than $500. "In these circumstances," according to one observ-

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er, "it would be absurd for a candidate to take a position on an issue because of a promised campaign gift."

Moreover, does money really talk? Detecting a correlation between the way congressmen vote and their sources of funding, Common Cause assumes that congressmen are beholden to special interests. But many legislators think Common Cause has misunderstood the process. According to Rep. Thomas Foley of Washington, who is chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, "the contributions follow the positions, not the other way around." PACs survey the political landscape, giving money to legislators they think will be sympathetic to their interests. The issue of campaign financing is of some importance, but it does not possess the significance that Common Cause has given it. During the Gilded Age, when the laws governing the political process were much less stringent than they are today, no "great decisions" were made as a result of corruption. Surely none of the "great decisions" of the past decade can be explained by pointing to the campaign contributions made by special interests. The shadow cast by PACs over the political process is not nearly as large as Common Cause says.

If Common Cause has lobbied for laws to eliminate the influence money supposedly has on the political process, it has also lobbied for laws to eliminate the "influence" of secrecy. As a lobbyist for open government, Common Cause has been very successful. In the last decade the operation of the legislative branch has been radically transformed. In 1972, for example, almost half of all House committee meetings were closed to the public, whereas in 1975 only 3 percent were closed. As Gardner said: "We've made astonishing gains....We've opened up the bill-drafting sessions of the House of Representatives, which is just a profound change in their way of operating. You can walk in and out of that Ways and Means Committee while they're drafting your tax laws. And now that you can, it seems insane that they ever thought they could do public business secretly."

Although Gardner assumes that a liberal democracy requires complete openness, the Founding Fathers—with the exception of Jefferson—thought otherwise. They were not, of course, in favor of closed government, but they thought there would be times when it might be prudent for a national legislature to deliberate in secret. Hamilton said of the Constitutional Convention that "had deliberations been open while going on, the clamours of faction would have prevented any satisfactory result," and Madison said that "the Constitution would never have been adopted by the convention if the debates had been public." Far from thinking that secrecy bred corruption, Madison thought that secrecy aided deliberation—that in complex matters of great moment secrecy was useful because it enabled men to be open, as he said, "to the force of argument."

Both Madison and Hamilton did not think secret sessions of the national legislature antithetical to the spirit of republican government. Although America's government, they might have said with Lincoln, is of the people, by the people, and for the people, it is a government in which the people do not directly participate. The distinctive nature of the American form of republican government, Publius says in *Federalist* 63, "lies in the total exclusion of the people in their collective capacity," from any share in the government. The people, according to the First Amendment, have the right "to petition the government for a redress of grievances," but they do not have a right to know about all the deliberations that take place in Congress. Although Article 1, Section 3 of the Constitution requires each house to keep a journal of its proceedings, it says that it may leave out "such parts as may in their judgment require secrecy."

Arguing in favor of a lobbying disclosure bill that has been opposed by virtually all other lobbying groups—both special interest groups and "public interest" groups—the legislative director of Common Cause has said that "the public has a right to know of the significant, organized, outside pressures exerted on Government decision-making." Perhaps the public has a "right to know" of the forces being brought to bear upon the governmental decision-making process, but one observer has said that the "right to know" has become "a new quasi-constitutional right," before which all other considerations must bow. The Founding Fathers did not extol secrecy, but neither did they rule it out. And they probably would have had grave reservations about the spate of laws enacted in the mid-1970s that have made the American government probably the most open government in history.

Both the lobbying disclosure bill and a bill to extend public financing to House general election campaigns have not fared well in congressional committees, so that there is some question whether they will become law. Whatever their fate, the fact that they have encountered difficulties suggests that there is a growing dissatisfaction with "good government" reforms, perhaps because many of the laws that have been passed have had unintended consequences. The campaign finance laws, it is said, favor incumbents and cut the level of grassroots participation in elections. Disclosure laws have imposed cumbersome reporting requirements on candidates for office and on high government officials. And under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, the FBI and the CIA are required to process and occasionally ship documents to requesters from Communist and Third World countries.

But by far the most common complaint is that many of these changes have tended "to reinforce individualistic anti-party politics." Because the money raised by PACs is given to individuals, not to parties, congressmen have become relatively independent of parties and less inclined to vote along party lines. In the 95th Congress voting along party lines was at the lowest level in 36 years. Whether such independence is a good thing is a question that is probably on the minds of many congressmen. For one thing, it results in their being besieged by lobbyists. In an atomized Congress, lobbyists cannot rely on the power of certain key congressmen to command votes and get legislation passed. A decade ago, according to a recent report, "the AFL-CIO's skilled lobbyist Andrew Biemiller would figure that any clear labor issues had 180 votes for it and the same number against....Now Biemiller figures that only about 135 congressmen can reliably be counted on to aid or oppose

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labor's position, and some 300 have to be individually assessed." In the past five years the number of lobbyists in Washington has almost doubled—from 8,000 to 15,000 people.

Is the shadow cast by these "reforms" larger than the shadow cast by the supposed evils of money and secrecy? Many politicians—both Democrats and Republicans—have come to think so. Several congressmen have complained of the increasing difficulty they have in performing their function as mediators and one has argued that a preoccupation with clean government has worked to the advantage of those who may be rigorously honest but not particularly inventive in addressing the issues of the day. William Greider of the *Washington Post* has said that if the penchant for political "reform" continues, "Americans may wind up with a squeaky-clean Congress that frustrates genuine democratic interests, that is less satisfying and more unrepresentative than the hoary old club it replaced."

We cannot say, though, that Common Cause has always been on the wrong side of issues it has chosen to lobby on. But we can say that these issues are more complex than Common Cause has allowed, and that Common Cause's rhetoric has made it difficult for legislators to deliberate upon them carefully. Moreover, Common Cause itself does not seem to have learned from its own experience—learned in the sense of modifying its claims in the light of what has occurred. During the ten years of its existence, Common Cause has rigidly stuck to its party line. Though its staff has differed about the exact relationship between money and influence—Gardner has spoken of it as "the game of barter and purchase," whereas Wertheimer has said that "ours is not a barter system, but a system of relationships and dependencies"—by and large Common Cause has continued to trumpet money and secrecy as unmitigated evils. Bureaucratic self-interest may have constrained Common Cause to remain faithful to its original diagnosis of the governmental process, but another factor is also at work: Like the Mugwumps' in the 1880s, Common Cause's profession of disinterestedness makes it immune to the arguments of others—makes it easy for Common Cause to dismiss those who challenge their arguments as either venal politicians or their apologists. Their disinterestedness makes them incapable of even contemplating the possibility that the "reforms" they have abetted may have contributed to the paralysis of "society's problem-solving capacity."

By harping on the venality of politicians and by insisting that Americans distrust their elected representatives, Common Cause often seems to want to bring into question the validity of representative democracy itself, at least as we know it. In this way it abets certain populist approaches to governance—like referenda, recalls, and direct elections—even though, as a Washington-based organization that considers lobbying on Capitol Hill one of its primary activities, it does not officially support them. In fact, Common Cause shares two key adjectives with the proponents of referenda, who are given to saying that direct democracy will make government more "accountable" and more "responsive."

According to Gardner, Common Cause has introduced "a new ingredient into the political system, a means of assuring continuous accountability to the citizen—a means of voting between elections." By "continuous accountability," Common Cause seems to mean that legislators should remain firmly attached to their campaign positions. In a recent issue of *In Common,* Common Cause's quarterly journal, there are charts of how those who ran for national office in 1978 responded to a questionnaire on different issues. Common Cause exhorts its members to "keep the charts handy so that you can call your legislators to account as these issues come up for votes during the two years of this Congress." If legislators do not remain faithful to their original positions, then Common Cause will attack them, as it did when it recently attacked several senators "for completely ignoring their clear campaign commitments less than seven months into their term." By changing their views, Common Cause said, "they demonstrate to their constituents that their words are meaningless."

Common Cause implies that all such changes of view constitute a betrayal of the public trust, but in *The Federalist* Publius assumed that men would change their views on many issues when they became national legislators. The very fact of sitting in a deliberative body composed of men from throughout the country would make them "superior to local prejudices." For the first time they would see things from a national perspective and as a result they would be able to pursue "great and national objects." "Continuous accountability" makes it difficult for representatives to become national legislators—to be educated by the office they hold. "Continuous accountability" resembles the binding instructions 18th-century electors—both in the colonies and in Britain—sometimes gave to their representatives. Arguing against such instructions, Burke asked: "What sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion...?" Continuous accountability also makes it very difficult for legislators to make "great decisions," since they cannot be open, as Madison said, to the force of argument. Finally, continuous accountability is a very radical notion, and Gardner was right to say that Common Cause was "introducing a new ingredient into the political system." For it implies that regular elections are not sufficient to ensure that representatives act in accordance with the will of the people. It implies that the system of republican government devised by the Founding Fathers does not work.

Responsiveness is another quality that Common Cause thinks legislators should have: Legislators should be in touch with their constituents, and constituents should visit with their representatives. "In each district or community," Cohen has said, "Common Cause members should arrange at least two visits a year with their House member....This is the practical meaning of effective citizen action." According to a recent report, many congressmen are very "responsive" to their constituents: "Mem-

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bers elected to Congress in the 1970s tend to devote more attention to serving their constituents, both through congressional services and largely political trips home." Trips home are both expensive and time-consuming. On the average, congressmen go home to their districts 35 weekends a year; in 1978 House members spent $3.1 million in public funds for such trips.

Many congressmen, then, are responsive, but are they acting as national legislators when they spend so much time soliciting the views of their constituents? "Your representative," Burke said, "owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion." By acting responsively legislators demean the function of representation, implying that a congressman is chiefly a messenger or an ombudsman. By acting responsively, moreover, legislators rarely leave themselves enough time to think about the issues they are grappling with. Finally, by acting responsively they tend to ingratiate themselves with their constituents at the expense of the country's political institutions.

John Gardner has said that a citizen's movement "should want the freely elected representatives of the people to represent them wisely and well," but Common Cause's idea of republican government reduces legislators to men who are rigid when they should be flexible and servile when they should be proud, legislators who lack the courage to say that they will vote on matters not by taking opinion polls of their constituents but as they see fit, beholden only to their judgment and conscience.

"Our Founding Fathers," Gardner has also said, "presumed continuing vigilance on the part of citizens." They presumed no such thing. They were, in fact, worried about the extreme suspicions many American patriots habored for all but the most local of governments. Such vigilance, the Founders thought, would make deliberation impossible, for men would be accused of betraying the public trust if they changed their views on any matter. What the Founding Fathers wanted was a new kind of patriotism, a patriotism that abjured motive-hunting, a patriotism that recognized the need for accommodating the views of the numerous special interests that would inevitably arise in an extended republic, a patriotism that acknowledged the importance of an elite corps of national legislators whose "enlightened views and virtuous sentiments" would render them "superior...to schemes of injustice." Whatever we think of the particular changes Common Cause has advocated, its general rhetoric and its specific understanding of representation recall the patriotism that Publius most feared, the patriotism proclaimed by "men of little faith" in representative government—men, as Publius says in *Federalist* 57, "who profess the most flaming zeal for republican government, yet boldly impeach the fundamental principle of it; who pretend to be champions for the right and the capacity of the people to choose their own rulers, yet maintain that they will prefer those only who will immediately and infallibly betray the trust committed to them." □

Douglas J. Feith

RADICAL SHEIKS

What stake have we in wooing "moderate" oil regimes that exploit us economically and politically?

President Carter has assured the country that he will defend the "vital interests" of the United States in the Persian Gulf region "by any means necessary, including military force." Chief among these "vital interests" is our access to affordable Persian Gulf oil. After all, lack of access, unlikely as this prospect may be, could cause economic dislocations with calamitous consequences. For at least the short run (that is, the period in which economic cataclysms occur, governments are overthrown, wars are fought), Persian Gulf oil will remain a vital interest of the United States. Since the violation of Afghanistan, the Carter administration talks as if it grasps the Soviet threat to this interest and will arrange to defy it. But it still shows no defiance toward the region's oil sheiks, though they continually threaten the same interest.

Fear and favor, as it were, govern U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf. Among U.S. policymakers, the ascendant school preaches that the United States must pacify, not confront, the oil states. Can such preaching be squared with President Carter's new line on Soviet expansionism and the U.S. interest in oil from the Persian Gulf? Catering to the region's oil-producing countries, it turns out, not only fosters their ability to threaten U.S. interests effectively, but hampers our efforts to secure these interests from the Soviets.

Days after proclaiming his commitment to use force to defend U.S. interests in the Middle East, President Carter told a press gathering that the United States will not be able to defend these interests after all without the consent of the local oil states. Explaining this conclusion, the President said, "I don't think it would be accurate for me to claim that at this time, or in the future, we expect to have enough military strength and enough military presence there to defend the region unilaterally."

In a similar vein, on the same day Senate Democratic Leader Robert Byrd suggested that the Soviets' move into Afghanistan calls for even more determined U.S. efforts to please the oil-producing countries. Setting an example, Byrd urged Israel to mollify the Arabs with concessions on the West Bank. The strategic complexities of the West Bank issue—for instance, how concessions by Jerusalem would affect Israeli security, or how weakening Israel's military posture would damage America's military position in the region—shrink to trifles, in Byrd's view, when contrasted with America's overriding goal: persuading the oil states to allow us to defend U.S. vital interests. "As long as there is this West Bank autonomy problem," Byrd stated, "our ability to cooperate with Arab countries in meeting the common danger of possible Soviet expansionism is hampered."*

Statements like these reflect the deference U.S. officials pay the oil states, a deference encouraged, naturally, by the oil states themselves. The Saudis in particular are skillfull at presenting their case, play-

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* This sentiment is of a piece with the administration's decision in January to pressure Jerusalem more vigorously for even greater Israeli

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ing on themes of love and dread, marshaling arguments that lead insistently to the conclusion that Americans should fear Saudi displeasure, actively seek Saudi favor, and conscientiously avert confrontations with Riyadh. The most potent of the arguments are those that aim to intimidate, as when Saudi Prince Fahd warns: "We are not compelled to be friends with the Americans. There are many doors wide open to us, be it on the military, technological or economic level. There are many states like the United States which are ready to furnish the kingdom with everything it wants. We can easily replace the Americans."†

Since thoughtful practitioners of intimidation appreciate the usefulness of arranging for their victims to save face, the Saudis offer affirmative reasons why the United States should strive to satisfy their desires. Again, Prince Fahd: "We are not only friends of the U.S. President and the U.S. administration but also regard ourselves as friends of the American people and the American press too. The Saudi Arabian Kingdom's relationship with the U.S. people is a special one and deserves to be respected and safeguarded."

Western press reports and the "scholarly literature" frequently follow Fahd's lead and portray the Saudis as America's blessing in burnoose. There is hardly a reference to Saudi Arabia in print nowadays that does not characterize it as either "moderate" or "prowestern." This is illustrated clearly in a study by Dale R. Tahtinen entitled *National Security Challenges to Saudi Arabia.*‡ Tahtinen describes the Saudis as "moderate," "friendly," "stable," "prowestern," and, specifically, "pro-American." (He likewise labels the other Persian Gulf oil states "basically prowestern.") "There would probably be little disagreement," Tahtinen writes, "that a friendly and cooperative Saudi Arabia is crucial to the United States and the remainder of the western world." Although this is accurate only insofar as the lack of general disagreement is concerned, Tahtinen advocates solicitude toward the Saudis: "Given the importance of maintaining a friendly regime in Saudi Arabia, it is essential to consider what the United States should do to support Riyadh's goals, as well as the options the Saudis might exercise in the absence of adequate American cooperation."

With all the talk of the oil states' anti-Soviet inclinations, their "moderate" oil policies, and the critical importance of keeping them "cooperative," it has become common to view the security and friendship of the sheiks' regimes as a fundamental national interest of the United States. But that is not our fundamental interest. Washington has taken its eye off the ball.

Our interest in the Persian Gulf region is oil (that is, access to an affordable supply thereof). The United States has no interest in the stability or the well-being of the Persian Gulf autocracies as such. Indeed, we should promote their stability and well-being only if by doing so we advance America's primary interests. When such an interest—for example, defending the oil fields against the Soviets—conflicts with the desires of the oil-producing regimes, we should recognize which U.S. goal is primary and act accordingly. This is not, however, the Carter administration's approach as it attempts, in the aftermath of the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Teheran and the Red Army's coup in Kabul, to arrange for U.S. military bases in the Persian Gulf region.

There is much to recommend the establishment of such bases. Proximity to the Gulf affords the Soviets, especially since Afghanistan, an invaluable military advantage, the usefulness of which is increased by America's inadequate "lift" capability. Regional bases would help offset that advantage. Furthermore, by improving America's conventional military position, such bases would decrease the risk of nuclear war by minimizing our reliance on nuclear force to deter a Soviet attack.

Nonetheless, the oil states in the Persian Gulf have emphatically condemned the idea. "The defense of the Gulf is the concern of its peoples and they reject any interference in their affairs," Kuwait's minister of state for foreign affairs told a Kuwaiti newspaper. Abu Dhabi's newspaper, *Al Wahda,* attacked Washington's plans and urged Arabs to "confront any attempt to establish the kind of military presence in the area which will only shake the independence of our nations and threaten the stability and security of the area." The Saudis, in the words of the *New York Times,* "have been outspoken in insisting that they will not permit the United States to build new bases or military installations on their soil." Saudi Prince Fahd stated, "The major powers have their own interests....When ties exist between a major power whose population is 200 million and a small power whose population is no more than one million, the possibility of the latter being overrun by force of arms, as has happened in Afghanistan, becomes a possibility that must be taken into consideration."

The Carter administration has decided to respect these sensibilities by abandoning plans for a broadly based U.S. military presence in the Gulf region. No attempts appear to have been made to pressure the oil sheiks on this matter. From among the Gulf states, only Oman, not an OPEC power, remains a candidate for U.S. military facilities. Kenya, over 1,700 miles from the Gulf, is likely to lend us a hand, as are Somalia and Egypt, both renowned for their flip-flops in and out of the Soviet camp. Israel, a militarily potent democracy, unwaveringly pro-American, has offered to assist but has been rebuffed. As the *New York Times* reported: "Administration officials said the United States would use bases there only as a last resort because it would antagonize the Arab world. Said one official: 'The obvious is obvious.' "

"risks for peace." In the words of the *Washington Post* (January 17, 1980): "The Carter Administration unmistakably signaled Israel of its intention to push harder and faster for progress in the West Bank and Gaza Strip autonomy negotiations, in the apparent belief that a breakthrough would make it easier for both the United States and Israel to play a more assertive role in stabilizing the region."

† *Al-Hawadith,* January 11, 1980.

‡ American Enterprise Institute, 1978.

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Administration officials explain the oil states' antagonism in various ways, among them, the "current controversy over the Saudis' Westernization program" (*New York Times*), the fear that U.S. bases "would isolate pro-Western governments and draw fire from radical Arab countries" (*New York Times*), the concern, regarding a possible U.S. base in Saudi Arabia, that "such a highly visible American presence would provoke Arab protests and hazard the existing Saudi government" (*Washington Post*), and the Saudis' belief that "as long as there is little progress toward solution of the Palestinian question, an intimate and open association with the United States can be seen as anti-Arab and thus dangerous" (*Washington Post*). At times, administration officials have made themselves look ludicrous trying to defuse resentment against the Saudis with suggestions like the following, which appeared in the *Washington Post*: "Saudi Arabia is now favorably disposed to U.S. facilities in the region *although it is not going to advertise the idea and may even criticize it occasionally*" (my italics).

The administration fails to realize that the oil-producing states are not about to be enticed into accepting U.S. bases, although they could conceivably be pressured to do so. The oil states view U.S. military strength in the region as a danger to them; they make no attempt to conceal this. Their bargaining power derives ultimately from the threat (albeit, to those who understand the economics of the matter, not a very credible threat) to do violence to the U.S. economy by cutting off oil.** A U.S. military presence on the ground in their countries would undermine whatever credibility this threat has and would, thereby, reduce their bargaining power.

The oil states are anti-Soviet, but this does not make them pro-Western. They do rely on U.S. military power to hold the Soviets at bay, but they are content to keep their region more vulnerable to the Soviets than it has to be so long as this (1) allows them to maintain the credibility of their oil threats against their customers, and (2) keeps us from enhancing our bargaining power with them through the stationing of U.S. troops. Sometimes your enemy's enemy is *not* your friend.

** Our fear of the Saudis' reducing oil production, raising oil prices, altering petro-dollar disposition policies, or perhaps even cutting off the flow of oil to America altogether is justified only if one assumes that Riyadh, at relatively small cost to itself, could do substantial harm to the United States. This assumption, in turn, requires one to assume that the Saudis are now doing the United States favors, but they are not. The Saudis produce and price oil strictly in accordance with the principles of profit maximization and are in no position to deviate significantly from these principles without doing themselves grave economic harm, and perhaps undoing themselves politically to boot. The notorious oil weapon is properly perceived as a bar of soap carved to resemble a gun.

The conflict between the United States and the oil sheiks over U.S. military facilities cannot be resolved without one side or the other losing something of fundamental importance. No external affairs, such as the negotiations on the West Bank, can realistically be expected to influence the oil regimes' commitment to keeping U.S. troops at a distance. So long as Washington does not threaten interests of these regimes as valuable to them as the interest that would be undermined by Washington's defense plans, cooperation will remain out of the question, and the oil fields of the Persian Gulf will remain excessively vulnerable to the Soviets.

The Carter administration acts as if it is without power to deal forcefully, let alone forcibly, with the oil states. There is no reason, however, why they cannot be made to fear American displeasure at least as much as America now fears their displeasure. The oil states know that the United States is militarily stronger than they. They appreciate that their regimes face dangers from the Soviets, domestic subversives, and aggressive neighbors. They understand that U.S. policy, which favors the survival of their regimes and stability in the region, represents insurance against those dangers. And they recognize that playing the "Soviet card" in earnest would expose their feudal regimes to more peril than it would mitigate. Were Washington less categorical about the desirability of preserving their regimes, it would be they, not we, who strain to be accommodating, and they, not we, who shudder at the prospect of deteriorating relations between them and us.

There is no need for the United States to threaten military invasion or even to threaten to facilitate the toppling of these regimes by others. What is needed is for Washington to hint—for example, through an Assistant Secretary of State at a Senate hearing—that under certain circumstances the United States may become indifferent to the fate of the sheiks' regimes. Specifically, the administration might suggest what thus far has seemed unthinkable: that securing the oil fields from the Soviets is more important than the full contentment of the local regimes. Though U.S. officials might disfavor the idea, it would not exactly be the end of the world if these regimes changed hands. After all, the "radical" oil states, such as Iraq and Libya, sell us oil just as the "moderates" do, and the "moderates" charge the same prices as the "radicals." In fact, it was the leading "moderate," Saudi Arabia, that devised the notorious retroactive price hike. What really is our stake in wooing "moderate" oil regimes that, on the economic front, treat us just as the "radicals" do, and on the political front, exploit their reputations for moderation to extract costly diplomatic and strategic concessions from us?

A "tough" policy of this sort cannot possibly succeed, however, if the administration's broad strategies remain defensive and "untough." It would be fruitless to face down the oil states were we not willing, for example, to make good the promise to bar, "by any means necessary," Soviet encroachments into the U.S. sphere of influence in the Gulf region. But if we are not willing to make good on that promise, we are forfeiting our interests in advance. □

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Anne Crutcher

AFTER EASTERN LIVES

Soviet dissidents in the capitalists' paradise.

It seems a long time ago that Boris Pasternak's dubious masterpiece, *Dr. Zhivago,* was all most Americans knew about an indigenous Soviet literature differing from the official view of life in the Soviet Union. These days, the word "dissident" is in every decently sophisticated vocabulary and the reading list is already long enough to keep a generation of Ph.D. candidates busy.

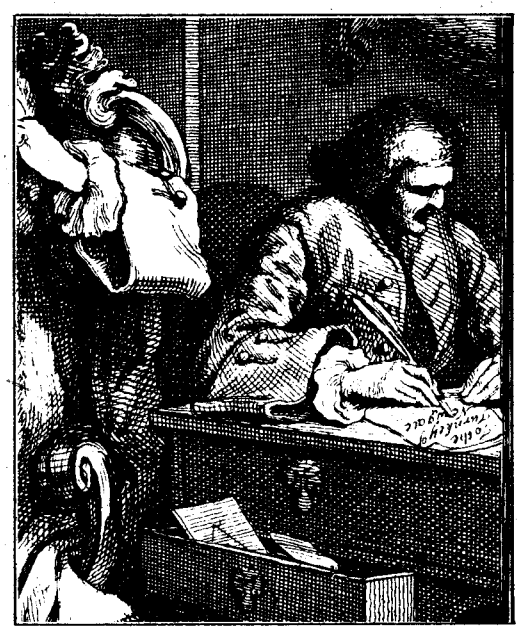
Dissident writing is understandably popular with hawks who find it useful for beefing up the case against SALT II. And Solzhenitsyn for one gives hero-worshipping natures an icon in a period conspicuously short on noble qualities. But it is easy to see the wider attraction of dissident writing as well. Is it not reminiscent of the kind of thing that came out of Hitler Europe on the Holocaust and the other Nazi horrors? Certainly Auschwitz and the Gulag camps offer the same opportunities for observing the human spirit put to supreme tests. And certainly the art fashioned from this awesome experience is as wonderful and terrible as ever.

There are differences this time around though. There was, during and immediately after the Hitler period, a surprisingly broad international consensus about how fascism had come into being and what the remedies and preventives were. Even those who were skeptical about all-out socialism were inclined to make many concessions to the idea that fascism represented a kind of demented capitalism, to be obviated by hefty doses of liberalism, chiefly in the form of decolonization, elections, and new state controls over economic life. With regard to the Soviet regime, however, there is much less conviction, about the remedy or even about the diagnosis. Thus, although the dissidents do not doubt that there is something hideously wrong in their native country, they are by no means in agreement about what it is, and they are even less able to say what to do about it.

It is both their strength and their weakness that they have been so cut off from the rest of the world. On the one hand, being untouched by the sophistries of Western political thought, they bring a special purity to their judgments of what they see around them. On the other hand, their ignorance of what has gone on in Western intellectual circles forces them to reinvent a certain number of wheels.

It also puts limits on their imaginative reach. As Georgie Anne Geyer pointed out in her extraordinarily perceptive and sadly neglected book, *The Young Russians,* many, if not most, Soviet dissidents, no matter how clear they are about the evils of socialism, cannot imagine a non-socialist society. Beyond getting rid of what they have, their objectives are vague.

Thus we have Roy Medvedev, who so brilliantly dissected the Stalin regime in *Let History Judge.* Medvedev is still in Moscow, trying one tactic after another to arrive at "socialism with a human face." Toward this end, he has worked with samizdat, the individually typed, personally distributed underground publications by which dissidents communicate in the Soviet Union, and has attempted, so far without success, to start above-ground publications with some truthfulness in their contents.



In *Let History Judge,* Medvedev described what he called the "enabling circumstances in the Soviet social structure" that permitted Stalin's reign of terror to occur. He is unwilling to call it cause and effect. The farthest he will go is to say that "socialism does not generate lawlessness as its enemies say, but it is no guarantee against lawlessness and the abuse of power."

Many dissidents, like Medvedev, are unwilling to blame the theory of the system for the way the system has turned out, but they differ over where to assign the blame. Excepting the outright apologists who, like the American enthusiast Anna Louise Strong, are willing to believe that Stalinism happened because Nazis penetrated the GPU, they offer a range of explanations: revolution betrayed, Stalin's private psychopathology, tradition of Asiatic despotism, price of rapid industrialization under conditions of external threat—pick one.

At the other end of the spectrum is Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who regards Marxism as intellectually contemptible as well as horrendous in practice and who feels that the only alternative is a Christian state. Many of the most intellectually gifted and personally impressive figures in the Soviet dissident movement are, if not with him all the way in his faith, at least convinced that socialism is an active evil and the key to the Gulag syndrome.

Vladimir Maximov, a novelist of Tolstoyan sweep, who is currently editor of *Kontinent,* the Paris-based magazine specializing in dissident writing for clandestine distribution in the Soviet Union and some circulation elsewhere, is one. He is a devout Christian who goes all the way in rejecting Marxism with his rejection of Stalin. Vladimir Bukovsky, who came to the West three years ago, exchanged for a Chilean Communist, is less explicitly religious but equally convinced that Lenin and socialist theory are as much to blame as Stalin for what has gone wrong in the USSR.

The disenchanted who do not go from

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their negation of one faith to the affirmation of another find themselves in an existential wilderness best illustrated by that peculiarly fervid French confessional, Bernard-Henri Levy's *Barbarism with a Human Face.* Levy, rejecting socialism as an untenable ideal rather than merely a flawed reality, indulges himself in a good deal of histrionic despair before coming to rest in the high stoicism celebrated by Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus,* which affirms the need for pushing moral stones up metaphorical hills no matter how inevitably they roll down again.

Essentially, this is Bukovsky's position, without the hand-wringing. Bukovsky, who may be the most remarkable of the younger generation of dissidents, is particularly unusual for the way the political astuteness in him combines with a sense of where politics leaves off. He was the first dissident to protest the Soviet regime by demanding that it adhere to Soviet law. And he is keenly aware of the psychic vulnerabilities of totalitarian power wielders. (They can't, for example, permit suicides or hunger strikes—their claim to omnipotence demands that they be the ones to decide when and how their prisoners die.) But at the same time, Bukovsky opposes fighting totalitarian evils with counterterrorism because counterterrorism would set up the same kind of regime it overthrew. Change, he believes, must begin in the individual where, in the ultimate weighing of things, its real importance is. He explicitly regards his own protests and incarcerations as spiritual necessities first and not necessarily political acts at all.

Needless to say, this is not the same thing as having a blueprint for transforming the Soviet Union into a capitalist democracy. Neither is it the outline of some as yet untried economic and social system. But it does suggest that the Soviet Union is today the catalyst for a good deal of important thinking about the nature of human beings and the societies in which they live.

This reassessment of basics owes its vitality, first of all, to the immediacy of experience fueling it. During the thirties and forties, much of what was said about fascism and the socialist panacea rested on interpretations of the plights of others. A Soviet dissident passing judgment on Marxism-Leninism is reacting to personally felt circumstances. Being the real thing, or being in touch with the real thing, in no way guarantees the quality of what is being said, but there is more than one instance where closeness to the marrow of things has given Soviet dissident writing the incandescence of art.

There are flashes of it in Maximov's fictionalized autobiography, *Return from Nowhere,* which came out last year. The story of a boy on his own from the age of 12, in and out of prisons and hobo camps all over the Soviet Union, it is a sort of grim Huck Finn saga, wherein moments of camaraderie and youthful discovery are set alongside scenes offering plenty of evidence that Huck Finn and Tom and Nigger Jim didn't know how lucky they were.

Return from Nowhere also invites comparison with another American work that created considerable stir when it came out in the 1950s: Jack Kerouac's *On the Road.* This time the likeness emphasizes the contrast—and it's embarrassing. Next to Maximov's book, Kerouac's is reduced to juvenilia. Kerouac's cultivation of criminal and derelict friends because "a writer ought to have new experiences" is different from Maximov's relationships with the criminals and derelicts life threw in with him. The slumming impulse that prompted Kerouac's Skid Row tour of the United States is as different from the life-and-death imperatives of the Maximov odyssey through the Soviet Union as the "repressive" bourgeois culture of Kerouac's contempt is from the real repression of the Soviet regime. Kerouac emerges as a trivial bohemian, Maximov as an explorer of spiritual and artistic frontiers.

If a dissident is a native-born critic, discerning and articulately appalled, of life in the Soviet Union, the phenomenon is considerably older than the label. Actually, some of the earliest out of old Russia as it was turning into its revolutionary successor have written most eloquently about it. Vladimir Nabokov, for instance, applied his extraordinarily non-proletarian imagination to the Soviet phenomenon in *Bend Sinister, Invitation to a Beheading, Pale Fire,* and a remarkable short story called "Tyrants Destroyed."

Although what is generally thought of as the dissident movement was first noticed in the United States in the mid-1960s, there were dissident writings of a sort coming out of the Soviet Union in the Stalin era, writings that would not have been permitted during the balmiest days of the Khrushchev thaw, and certainly would not be permitted today.

There is pathos, then, in reading in the preface to a volume of Mikhail Zostchenko's short stories, published in the United States in 1935 under the title *Russia Laughs,* that this "leading Soviet humorist" had millions of readers in his own country. Zostchenko should, of course, have millions of readers anywhere that wry observations on human nature and social custom can raise a laugh. But certainly in recent years any depictions like Zostchenko's, of poverty, squalor, and the persistence of both peasant and bourgeois mores, would never get past the criminal code, where slandering the Soviet system is so broadly interpreted and so strictly forbidden. The one about the landlady who cut the wires after the great electrification

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program finally reached her house (it showed up the dirt and bedbugs and broken furniture so badly when there was an electric light on), or the one about the man looking back on the happiest day of his life, when somebody threw a rock through a tavern window and he, a glazier, was able to fix it for what seemed an extraordinary sum of money—no, they would never get by.

Neither would Panteleiman Romanof's 1931 novel, *Three Pairs of Silk Stockings,* which describes the life of the educated class in 1931 Moscow, where families of four or more share a room with other families. The rest of their standard of living is cut to the same measure. The title is one character's estimate of the price of any Russian woman.

A decade after Stalin's death, such living conditions had changed less than the scope for talking about them in the Soviet Union. In the mid-1960s, cultural controls were severe enough to move any serious artist toward a state of open or covert rebellion.

For two middle-aged literary men, the critic Andrei Sinyavsky (Abram Tertz) and a translator named Yuli Daniel, rebellion broke the surface enough to trigger criminal proceedings. They were arrested in February 1965 on charges of anti-Soviet agitation under Article 70 of the criminal code. This was not a civil rights issue of the sort that later dissidents have made known to the West; rather, it was seen as an abridgment of artistic freedom.

The imprisonment of Sinyavsky and Daniel did not at first attract much attention in the United States, although a few hardline anti-Communist organizations tried to publicize it.* But it was different in the Soviet Union. Suddenly, a new generation of protestors arose. The first wave went to prison in 1967, punished for demonstrating in Moscow against the imprisonment of Sinyavsky and Daniel. The next year, there were further waves of public demonstration in Moscow's Pushkin Square or at the statue of the poet Mayakovsky, where young people interested in the arts were accustomed to gather.

Unlike their predecessors, these were young people in their 20s—and they were by no means all artists. And, rather than urging artistic freedom, they demanded rights guaranteed to them by the Soviet constitution. In the last ten years, this body of dissidents has swelled considerably as protests over Sinyavsky and Daniel and over the invasion of Czechoslovakia and over the rights of Jews to emigrate have led to arrests which have in turn led to more arrests and more protests.

The Soviet response to these protests has ranged from prison and labor camps to internal exile (the most recent example of which was the sending of Andrei Sakharov to Gorky) and banishment. One KGB agent was quoted as telling a dissident, "We will break some of you, we will buy others and the rest we will throw to the West." All three techniques have entailed their measures of success. Even banishment, for all the adverse publicity it provokes, gets results in some cases. Solzhenitsyn, for example, finds the United States too soft and hedonistic, while a good many Americans find him too stern and righteous. Certainly the mutual disillusionment doesn't hurt Moscow.

The same sort of thing has happened with other exiles. Some of the Jews have found life in Israel unexpectedly uncongenial, for instance. Other exiles, because of their intense love of their native country, are homesick and unhappy wherever they go. And then there are cultural barriers: Maximov, for example, has yet to master French, although he has lived in Paris for several years.

Moreover, when dissidents come to the West some of the drama goes out of what they represented as prisoners in the Soviet Union, at least by media standards. Magazines and newspapers only continue to discuss the Shcharansky case, for instance, because the beautiful, yearning Avital Shcharansky goes on making the rounds in an effort to get her husband released from his Soviet prison so they can emigrate to Israel.

Even so, the dissidents are not without friends. The AFL-CIO, for instance, brought Solzhenitsyn to speak in Washington soon after he emigrated to the United States. And the constellation of think tanks and academic and media enclaves known as the neoconservative movement has taken an active interest in keeping the dissident movement alive in the American consciousness. The Coalition for a Democratic Majority, the Moynihan-Jackson wing of the Democratic Party, regularly honors dissidents at its functions, in person or in absentia. And the American Enterprise Institute has had Bukovsky and Alexander Ginzburg, among others, addressing seminars and answering questions at press conferences.

The biggest recent roundup of dissidents was the International Sakharov Hearings held in the Senate Office Building in Washington in September. The testimony the dissidents gave there provided a kind of encyclopedia of personal experiences showing how and why the Soviet Union controls its citizens. It was a congress of the protest elite, an assemblage of resonating names: Sinyavsky, whose case launched the present wave of dissidence and who is widely considered its greatest mind and soul; Alexander Ginzburg, still marked by the pallor of an imprisonment only recently ended; Major General Petro Grigorenko, the Soviet military hero who spent four years in a psychiatric hospital for criticizing personality cults after Stalin's death. Mrs. Alexander Solzhenitsyn delivered a message for her husband.

At least one name resonated out of a more distant past: Pavel Litvinov, grandson of Maxim Litvinov, Stalin's foreign minister and later his popular World War II Ambassador to the United States. The elder Litvinov's success in winning Washington support for the Soviet Union was helped by the enthusiasm of his wife Ivy, who, as an English Communist, had met and married him when he was in London in the late 1920s negotiating arms trade agreements. Their grandson, a scientist who now lives in the West, was at the Sakharov hearings to tell the story of his four years of internal exile working in a mine in Siberia—his sentence for protesting the Sinyavsky-Daniel arrests and sentences.

Among the unfamiliar names that turned up at the Sakharov hearings was that of Aesha Seytmuratova, who told what hap-

* Sinyavsky got seven years in a strict regime camp, Daniel five. Strict regime means hard labor on few calories, with the rest of the standard of living to match.

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pened to her when she was six and the Crimean Tatars were moved to Uzbekistan. The Uzbeks had been told that they were cannibals and had appropriate greetings for the few who survived the journey in the sealed cattle cars. Her story was enough to reduce the audience to tears, but there was nothing about it in the press the next day.

Not every witness reached the listeners' emotions the way this woman did, but all the testimony was as substantial and, in its own way, as horrifying. Besides the revelations about how the system uses internal passports, residence permits, and a combination of firings, expulsions from unions, and arrests for the crime of being unemployed (parasitism) to control dissidents, there were reports on what happens to Soviet workers and peasants. The system is equally hard on people entirely innocent of concern with Czechoslovakia or literature. They too are manipulated by these controls and by the secret courts that keep the record clean.

The three days of hearings brought out any number of such details without much apparent impact on the bustle of Capitol Hill outside. There was that strange echo-chamber inwardness. Everybody may know Lara's theme from the movie of Dr. Zhivago, but there is a certain imperviousness to what the dissidents have to say. Too many residual loyalties? Too few inspiriting alternatives?

Whatever the reasons, it is a little like what happened to that Soviet favorite among American writers, Jack London, when he found himself suddenly taken up by the radical chic millionaires of his day. He expected them to tear off their jewels and divide up their properties once they heard what he had to tell them about the sufferings of the poor. He really thought they would. □

Fred D. Baldwin

NADERISM: COMMERCE ON THE BABYLONIAN MODEL

For Ralph Nader, the business of business is politics, but with his "Case for a Corporate Democracy Act" he goes too far.

If you cherish a cause but sense that the public does not share your vision, it may occur to you to proclaim a national "day" for spreading your message, something like Earth Day, Sun Day, or Food Day. April 17 has been declared "Big Business Day," but do not look for a national celebration of capitalism's bounty. The festivities are being planned neither by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce nor by the Business Roundtable, but by Ralph Nader's Public Citizen Congress Watch and a coalition of labor unions and other groups.

If their efforts are successful, "Big Business Day" will be marked by "teach-ins and debates, alternatives-to-big-business fairs, . . . 'trials' of corrupt companies, nominations for a 'Corporate Hall of Shame,' " and other pieces of political theater described in a flurry of press releases from the coalition's Washington headquarters. Its purpose will be to build political support for a "Corporate Democracy Act," an attempt to write into law fundamental changes in how large corporations are governed.

Calling themselves Americans Concerned about Corporate Power, the organizers of "Big Business Day" include the United Auto Workers, the United Farm Workers Union, the Coalition of American Public Employees, several large AFL-CIO affiliates, and some 50 liberal academics, politicians, environmentalists, consumer advocates, and clergy. The expected names are present: John Kenneth Galbraith, Michael Harrington, Barry Commoner, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. They are flanked by representatives of a score of liberal organizations that have successfully seized for themselves the question-begging label, "public interest groups."

Their legislative proposals are described in a 127-page booklet entitled, "The Case for a Corporate Democracy Act of 1980." It puts into one package most of the ideas Nader and his associates have been advocating for some time, notably in *Taming the Giant Corporation,* which appeared in 1976. Nader says that the proposed law would "reform the corporation by increasing the accountability of its decision-making process . . . [and] grant greater rights of access and voice to the various constituencies of the giant corporation—workers, consumers, communities, and shareholders."

The rationale for such legislation is that the largest American corporations are, in effect, private governments, unaccountable to anyone, and that they are run by an elite "handful of homogeneous executives" who are insensitive to democratic values. Americans Concerned about Corporate Power further contends that we are "in the midst of a corporate crime wave" and that state chartering has failed to control corporate excesses. The remedy for these ills is seen to be "federal minimum standards" for corporate governance and conduct. "The Case for a Corporate Democracy Act" contains the draft for a proposed law with seven major sections, which are not related to each other except as they all seek to impose new limits on the exercise of big-business discretion. Their inclusion in one package presumably gives each group within the supporting coalition something it wants. (It also has the

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probably not accidental effect of making it harder to analyze the proposals on their separate merits.)

The proposed law is described as applying only to firms having $250 million in assets or annual sales, or having more than 5,000 employees. Its sponsors say it would apply to somewhat more than 800 firms. About 80 percent of these would be industrial corporations, the remainder being retailers, utilities, and transportation companies. The working draft reads as if broader coverage is intended for some sections, and a staff spokesman for "Big Business Day" acknowledged by telephone that the law's coverage might "need to be expanded later." He said that adding more firms now would make passage nearly impossible. "We'd be attacking many of our own friends," he said, adding that small-business support was important to the coalition, although the press releases give no evidence that there is any. (Despite the range of sponsoring organizations, the press releases suggest that much of the political muscle behind the proposal depends on organized labor.) Three Democratic members of Congress have promised to introduce the requested legislation: Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum of Ohio, Rep. Benjamin Rosenthal of New York, and Rep. Frank Thompson, Jr., of New Jersey. The latter's anti-business credentials may now be marred by the FBI's allegations that he accepted $50,000 in cash from someone he supposed to have been an Arab businessman.

The legislative package may be easier to grasp if one looks first at Titles II through VI of the draft, which are primarily extensions of present regulatory law. Although they would go well beyond existing external controls over the corporations affected, they would not of themselves change the way corporations are governed. Taken together, however, they give a good sense of their sponsors' substantive agenda.

Title II would require firms to disclose in one report information relating to employment patterns, the environmental effects of their activities, job health and safety, the ownership and voting of stock, and overseas operations. The federal government would receive and publish what is often called a "social audit" of the reporting companies.

Title III would require a company to give two years' notice before closing down a plant employing either 500 workers or 20 percent of a local labor force and to provide the Secretary of Labor with a "community impact analysis" of the effects of the closing. The company would be required to pay some part of local government tax revenues lost as a result of the closing. (It is not clear whether the language refers to only the firm's own prior taxes, or all taxes lost because of lowered economic activity.)

Title IV would prohibit large corporations from firing an employee for "whistleblowing," for exercising his political rights, or for any other "unjust cause." The merits of disputes would be decided by the National Labor Relations Board, which now investigates charges of unfair labor practices under union agreements and may enforce its decisions through litigation. (This title sounds as if it is intended to apply to all firms now covered by the National Labor Relations Act, regardless of size; certainly there would be no logical reason for limiting its application to the corporate giants, if it were accepted in principle.)

Title V would prohibit anyone from serving as a director of more than two of the corporations to be covered by the law.

Title VI would deter, through a number of provisions, corporate and white-collar crime, generally by making it easier for prosecutors to proceed against corporate officers as individuals. Indictments could be brought both against suspected offenders and those of their superiors who presumably *should have known* of their alleged misconduct, without the necessity of showing that they actually did know about it.

That summarizes the regulatory agenda. The merits of these proposals are debatable to say the least, but they cannot be determined properly on the basis of the evidence presented in "The Case for a Corporate Democracy Act." It contains a mixture of horror stories and statistics. The existence of the former (like the dumping of toxic wastes by the Hooker Chemical Company) do not make the case, and the latter are often deceptive.

For example, although increasing the personal liability of corporate executives for illegal behavior by their firms is probably desirable, the existence of a "corporate crime wave" is the most weakly supported of all the Nader charges. Moreover, it provides so much of what little connective tissue there is for the separate proposals that much of the whole "case" falls apart when this charge is analyzed. It is based primarily on recent admissions of overseas bribery by large firms and on a count of the number of legal actions filed by government agencies in the last few years. Bribery in foreign countries is a rather special case of "crime in the suites" and poses moral as well as legal ambiguities. The other numbers cited are statistical artifacts of the growth of government regulation. By the same rules of evidence, the proposed "Corporate Democracy Act" would itself increase the apparent incidence of business crime by making many more actions criminal.

The proposal for more comprehensive corporate disclosure is also deceptively argued. As the text acknowledges, most of what would be required must already be filed with some federal agency. The authors of "The Case for a Corporate Democracy Act" are capable of saying that "the information is neither confidential nor prohibitively costly to gather and report," following this assertion two sentences later with the complaint that "obtaining standardized data on the social performance of corporations is a time-consuming and expensive job." Requiring some kind of uniform compilation of data on corporate social performance may well be a worthwhile idea, and it seems likely to be an idea whose time is coming. To pretend that it will be either easy or cheap is either naive or dishonest.

Of the three other substantive sections, I think there is something to be said for two and nothing but trouble likely to come from the third. The debate on interlocking directorates is an old one and doubtless com-

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plex, but it is hard to see how such interlocks can be other than anti-competitive in their overall effect. Similarly, despite some reservations about the proposal at hand, I think that cushioning the economic effect of plant closings is desirable. Conversely, although I have no doubt that many firings are unjust, the notion of bringing large numbers of new workers under what amount to union or civil service rules strikes me as appalling.

Again, the point is not whether a particular provision is desirable or not, but merely whether each proposal on the substantive agenda bears some relationship to a real problem. It is hard to make this connection for the most prominent "reform" advocated by Nader and his associates, which is contained in the proposed Title I.

This section sets forth a long-standing plan offered by Nader to "tame" corporations through federal chartering and a reconstitution of their boards of directors. The reconstituted boards would include a majority of "independent" directors, that is, individuals who are not employed by the company, do not own stock in it, and who do no substantial business with it. Elected by shareholders under procedures designed to maximize the influence of minority shareholders, certain directors would have specific responsibility for looking after the interest of several "constituencies": labor, consumers, environmental interests, and communities within which the company operated.

Nader and his associates argue that state chartering has "failed" to control corporate abuses, so federal intervention is required. This is a bit of deceptive packaging. The "Big Business Day" documents read as if the only laws standing between the public and the corporate giants are a few watered-down Delaware statutes. This is no more true than an implication that an individual is subject only to the laws of that state in which he happened to have received his birth certificate. Because it has a major bearing on management discretion and shareholder rights, the source of a corporation's charter is more important than that, but it is ridiculous to write as if corporations were not already regulated by the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Consumer Products Safety Board, and the Federal Trade Commission, just to mention a few agencies with almost universal jurisdiction.

As a practical matter, federal chartering proposals are no more than an elaborately justified exercise in judge-shopping. Having discovered some years ago the advantages of buying a few shares of stock and then bringing a shareholder suit, "public interest" lawyers would like to remove as many suits as possible from state courts, especially those of Delaware, whose judges are familiar with business issues and sympathetic to management, to the federal courts, especially those of the District of Columbia, whose judges are more attuned to the pleas of public interest lawyers.

Title I should be read in conjunction with Title VII (the final one), which outlines both a plan for expanded federal regulation, principally through the SEC and the NLRB, and an expanded basis for private lawsuits. Under this section the prevailing party in a suit could collect legal fees if a court determines that the lawsuit had "served an important public purpose" and "the party can demonstrate that its economic interest is small in comparison to its costs of effective participation." The "Big Business Day" sponsors say this would make the proposed law "largely self-executing." They mean that, with the incentives quoted above, "public interest" lawyers would take on otherwise unprofitable actions—if the judicial forum looked sufficiently favorable.

All this jockeying for legal position does affect the public interest, of course, and there is one area of significant public concern that "The Case for a Corporate Democracy Act" avoids. From an economic perspective, the proposed vehicle is all brakes and no motor. Despite a few perfunctory denials that it would be costly to administer and some suggestions that it would result in better-managed corporations, the sponsors of "Big Business Day" do not take the problem of productivity seriously. It is one thing to argue that the cost of increased regulation is warranted because of expected public benefits; it is another to pretend that those costs must not be paid, ultimately, by the public.

If more power were given to a "constituency-oriented" set of corporate boards, and if the other rules urged by Americans Concerned about Corporate Power were adopted, the one thing that is clear is that major business decisions would take longer and become more politicized. For example, the proposed law would require shareholder approval of major acquisitions and sales of assets. The stock market now does this far more efficiently than any balloting rule that could be administratively devised.

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Without pretending to know how many of the schemes of the labor-and-lawyer coalition would work in practice, I think I can form some idea of how the corporation envisioned by Nader might work, based on experience acquired far from corporate halls. I once helped to administer the Community Action Program, the central grant-dispersing mechanism of the Johnson War on Poverty. Title I of the "Corporate Democracy Act" reminds me of nothing so much as the rules devised to govern the formation and direction of local Community Action boards, which were intended to be representative of various administratively defined constituencies. These boards were, I still think, a reasonably creative way to handle the division of federal funds among competing interests, but they essentially gave a bureaucratic blessing to log-rolling, and I would not like to see the nation dependent on even the best of them to get things built, made, or marketed.*

Considering the labor-and-lawyer proposals as a whole, one realizes that an important legal theory is at stake. Nader and his associates argue that the corporation is a creation of the state and that its charter should delineate its public purpose. In this view, the modern open-ended charter that maximizes managerial discretion is an improper delegation of political authority. Hence it is appropriate to insist that charters impose positive social obligations. A better theory for a democracy is that a corporation is not a creature of the state at all. It is a form of contract among free individuals, and the role of the state is merely to record this contract and to establish the legal framework within which they can enforce the contract's terms. The legal entity so created is, of course, subject to laws and regulations, just as people are.

It is in the public interest that individuals be given freedom to join forces for their own economic benefit, for that brings general benefits with it. As John Chamberlain, in *The Enterprising Americans,* puts it:

> The contribution of American business and the market economy goes far beyond the mere feats of production. To a significant degree the business system, which gives free play to the decisions of individuals and voluntary groups, has allowed for a kind of uncoerced social collaboration that is wholly impossible under centralized government planning.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the long tract produced by Americans Concerned about Corporate Power is that it shows no appreciation of the value of strong private institutions that do not necessarily share their own sense of public purpose. Some of the proposed reforms may well be worthwhile, but the scheme as a whole is clearly intended to erode another barrier to the concentration of both economic and political power within the federal government. The concentration of wealth, and the undeniable power that comes with it, in the hands of some 800 private bureaucracies poses dangers for society, but the fact remains that 800 is a larger number than one. Perhaps the sponsors of "Big Business Day" should reflect on some of the lessons of Earth Day. The free market system looks healthy, but it is not hard to imagine it stagnating, like a lake filling in by eutrophication. The process, as Barry Commoner explained with clarity when he was still a mere scientist, reaches a certain point and then proceeds very fast. General Electric and IBM are so big that perhaps they will not be seriously hurt by a few more rules. But that's what people used to think about Lake Erie. □

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* In point of fact, American corporations have been moving in the direction of many of the Title I proposals over the last decade, goaded by the SEC and, to give him his due, Ralph Nader. For example, according to a Conference Board study, the percentage of the largest manufacturing corporations with a majority of outside directors rose from 63 percent in 1967 to 83 percent in 1976. The proper role of the SEC in stimulating these changes has been a matter of disagreement among its Commissioners. Harold Williams, the SEC's chairman, has prodded business hard to grant more authority to outside directors. With respect to actual regulations, Roberta Karmel has consistently pressed for a more conservative government role. One of her more impressive arguments is that a federally mandated board reorganization would cause a rapidly evolving set of private sector innovations to harden into whatever form gets through Congress at the time of its passage.

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John Nollson

THE NEW BRINKSMANSHIP

Because the Aggressors have failed to take our warnings to heart, and have not yet withdrawn, it is time to contemplate some strong medicine. The level of pain will surely be raised if we take one or more of the following steps.

The first is a total embargo on the export of blue jeans. This will cause serious unrest among the youth in the Aggressor's society, and has the added advantage of being easy to administer and politically manageable. The embargo will fall most heavily on Levi Strauss and Company, but the federal government can surely purchase the blue jean surplus to maintain the market price. Unlike the grain embargo, a blue jean embargo will have broad bipartisan support. So far as is known, there are no blue jean manufacturing facilities in the early primary states.

Though the State Department hesitates to take the step, Bette Midler's concert tour should be canceled, even if it takes presidential intervention to do it. Why should we offer outstanding entertainment to the Aggressors when they refuse to adhere to even the most rudimentary standards?

According to reliable intelligence reports, both Secretary Brezhnev and the Ayatollah Khomeini have expressed a desire to be Peppers. Too bad for them. Construction of the Dr. Pepper bottling plants in Kiev and Qom should be halted forthwith. Neither of these men should ever be allowed to say, "I drink Dr. Pepper and I'm proud." Rather, they should be made to feel shame.

On the other hand, we should move smartly along with our plans for the export of Ford Pintos, with Firestone 500 tires mounted thereon. Not only will this introduce a new note of risk into the Aggressor's calculations, it will remind them of a more fundamental point about world affairs: Even if they behave themselves, there's only so much the capitalist system can do for them. Indeed, we can drive home this point by allowing Aeroflot to proceed with its plans to purchase three dozen McDonald-Douglas DC-10s. No one else wants to buy them anyway.

Some thought should be given to appointing the Front Four of the Pittsburgh Steelers as the new SALT negotiating team. Though riddled with injuries, the Steelers' defensive line has shown itself remarkably adept at containing the run to the outside and mounting a credible pass rush against the opposition quarterback. If, for some reason, the opposition tries to run up the middle, we can also send in the linebacking corps to plug the holes. It's time to find out whether the Aggressor's offensive line can pick up a blitz, or whether it will merely foul up the blocking assignments.

Experts are divided as to whether the Southern Cal marching band should be allowed to proceed with its planned show in Red Square. Analysts differ as to whether the loud brass will rouse the Politburo from its slumbers (bad) or bore it to death (good). In order that this be a well-informed decision, the government has begun to poll all those who attended the Rose Bowl game this past New Year's Day.

Many Kremlinologists hold that the recent Soviet gambits have been a miscalculation. They stress the importance of insuring that the Politburo does not miscalculate in the future. Accordingly, the current embargo on the export of calculators should be lifted, but not totally. In particular, the Mattel Company should be allowed to market its new computerized game, Electronic Geopolitics. Of course, this game is a bit more taxing than Othello, but the Aggressors should be encouraged to play it as much as possible. There is no use warning them about future miscalculations if you don't teach them how to avoid them.

It should also be made plain to the Aggressors that they are going to have to indemnify the Worldwide Trading Card Company of Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Worldwide had printed, under contract with the former government of Afghanistan, almost 400,000 Hafizullah Amin trading cards, only to be told that Kabul would not take delivery. Quite properly, the company refuses to print the new Babrak Karmal trading cards—nor will it wrap them with bubble gum—until someone makes good on the first contract. If we are ever to normalize relations with the new authorities, they will first have to understand that a deal is a deal.

With all the hoopla surrounding the 1980 Olympics, we have lost sight of some other equally important decisions that must soon be made. While the Olympic Committee was closeted in Colorado Springs, the National Football League owners were gathering in an undisclosed location, debating whether Moscow should be given one of the new franchises in the next expansion. This is real leverage. As is our current monopoly on the manufacture of microwave ovens. It is within our power to cut in half the amount of time the average Russian housewife spends in the kitchen preparing a roast. In fact, we have had this option for several years, and only the determined action of the Women's Caucus has prevented us from instituting a policy which, admittedly, would work greater hardship on Russian women than on Russian men. But surely, as the status-quo power, it is not *our* responsibility to export revolution.

We need to be reminded that the carrot is worthless without the stick. Either the Aggressors will cut it out, or they will be in for it when they feel the sting of a covert operation. One is already in the works. Six men will be infiltrated, one each, into the six largest cities in the Soviet Union. At precisely the same moment, each will bite into a Doritos corn chip, allowing the vibrations therefrom to wreak awesome devastation.

Withal, we have to keep up with the times. When I was a boy, patriotic Americans wanted to "unleash" Chiang Kai-shek. Old Chiang is gone now, but thank heaven we still have the Schlitz Malt Liquor Bull. □

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Theo Lippman, Jr.

CAMPAIGN FUNDAMENTS

Pieced together from piles of evidence.

If, like most people, you would rather read someone's medical records than his love letters or income tax returns, the February 18 issue of *Medical World News* is for you. One of its articles lists the workings and non-workings of the vital organs of John Anderson, Howard Baker, George Bush, John Connally, Philip Crane, Robert Dole, Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, and Edward Kennedy. (Jerry Brown refused to "volunteer his medical records.") You can learn all the details upon reading there, but my concern here is limited to the candidates' hemorrhoids, for this is a *political* essay, not a personality profile or "character" study.

Having hemorrhoids is political? No, but admitting to having them is. Until 1976 no presidential candidate had ever done so. It had always been a badge of shame and invited ridicule. Badge is not exactly the right metaphor, but you know what I mean. Presidents since George Washington have all denied having them, not only to their contemporaries, but to posterity. You may search the literature of the presidency and find no mention of them. In fact, Rudolph Marx, M.D., has done this with great thoroughness in *The Health of Presidents*. And I mean *thoroughness*. Franklin D. Roosevelt suffered from polio, of course, but also, according to Dr. Marx, from near-sightedness, tonsilitis, appendicitis, lumbago, high blood pressure, flu, small strokes, abcessed teeth, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, and bowel and bladder problems that cannot be properly described in a family magazine of this kind.

Dr. Marx's FDR did not suffer from hemorrhoids. I know, however, that FDR did. I saw a medical record to that effect at the FDR library a couple of years ago.

This makes me wonder about the earlier presidents, particularly the very early ones who often rode horseback. The saddle contributes greatly to the awful condition. A proctologist I know (only socially, of course) once told me that in today's America cowboys are the group most afflicted by hemorrhoids. He also told me that half or more of all adult American men are sufferers. I think it is not undue cynicism to surmise that George Washington may have told a lie about his health. Or maybe Jefferson. The odds are that one of the two had what Jimmy Carter said he had in 1976, which is hemorrhoids. In fact, the odds are that about half of all the presidents who preceded Carter also did. Considering the odds, and recalling that even Rudolph Marx, M.D., was misled about FDR, one has to wonder. (Dr. John B. Moses, of Scarsdale, New York, has a book on this subject coming out later this year—*Presidential Courage*. He says he also found out about FDR and suspects from indirect evidence that Andrew Jackson had the dark secret.)

Carter broke precedent in 1976 by confessing publicly to having the ailment—and he was elected. This year he's still suffering, according to Dr. William Lukash in *Medical World News*. Philip Crane has "an external hemorrhoidal tag at about 7 o'clock." John Connally has a "small external hemorrhoid." Everybody else is okay. Or their doctors *say* they're okay. Remember, the odds suggest that of these nine men, four or five should be troubled, not just three. Two or three denials are probably lies.

You are doing the arithmetic in your head. Three of nine admit it. Four or five should. Why do I detect "two or three" false denials? Because, if the truth be known, Jimmy Carter *does not have hemorrhoids*. He only claims he does. It is all part of the brilliant political strategy spelled out in a still-secret postscript to Hamilton Jordan's famous 40-page memorandum of 1974, the audacious plan by which Jimmy Carter rose from unpopular Southern governor to President of the United States. I am one of the few journalists to have seen it, and luckily the only one not sworn to secrecy.

Jordan reasoned that by claiming to have hemorrhoids, Carter would accomplish two important things as a candidate. First, he would appeal to those Americans, like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., who wanted a "less imperial" presidency. Wearing blue jeans, carrying your own suitcase, cleaning out a pond—on a scale of one to ten these are twos and threes when it comes to unimperialness. Admitting to having hemorrhoids is a ten. That is true even though *having* them is almost by definition imperial, the Emperor Napoleon I being the most famous sufferer in the history of the world.

Second, by "admitting" to his condition, Carter would appeal to those millions who suffer similarly. Misery loves company, and like favors like, as they say in Georgia. People stick with their own kind. Many Southerners who voted Republican in 1968 and 1972 voted for Carter in 1976, as did many people suffering from the condition under discussion here.

This targeted group was called the "Preparation H vote" in Carter planning sessions, by the way, and is not to be confused with the so-called "asshole vote," which was an even more important element in the Carter coalition but is not related to what I am talking about.

Some political scientists and ministers may object to a candidate's deceiving the voters about his health, but in this case I believe the end justifies the means, so to speak. I am not referring to Carter's getting elected, but to a more important effect of his campaign: his making a large group of Americans feel, for the first time in history, that they are just as good as anybody else, despite their affliction. Elections and the campaigns that precede them are not just a part of a political process. They are part of our cultural well-being. It is more important that candidates reveal their human qualities to be like yours and mine than that they have "policies" or "programs" or "ideas." If a candidate has to lie to make us feel better about a quality or condition that most of us have and are concerned about, what's wrong with that?

Jimmy Carter's saying he has hemorrhoids is the best, most helpful lie an American president has told the American people since Dwight Eisenhower said he was a Presbyterian, a lie which Carter's closely resembles, and he should be praised for it. □

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THE TALKIES

CRUISING

by John Podhoretz

Since the collapse of the internal censorship system in Hollywood, American movies have become increasingly explicit in their portrayals of sexual practices and violent acts. In 1967, there was an outcry over the ending of *Bonnie and Clyde,* in which the title characters are massacred in slow-motion by machine-gun fire; today such a scene would certainly merit only the slightest of reactions from its audience. In 1970, *A Clockwork Orange* received an "X" rating; today it is quite possible that it would be given a "PG" rating. Each time a certain level of explicitness is reached, it seems, Hollywood outdoes itself. The master of this one-upmanship is Sam Peckinpah, whose brilliant and violent *The Wild Bunch* led to the merely violent *Straw Dogs* and finally to the grotesque excesses of *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia,* in which said head is toted about in a saddlebag, out of which it frequently tumbles.

And now, with *Cruising,* it appears that William Friedkin has been playing the watch-me-top-this game as well. First, *The French Connection*; then *The Exorcist*; now *Cruising*. The new movie is almost assuredly the most sexually explicit and possibly the most violent movie yet to come out of big-money Hollywood. It appears now that Friedkin has one goal only: to make his audience sick. And he is an extremely gifted filmmaker. Is it praise to say he has achieved that which he set out to do?

Steve Burns, the protagonist of *Cruising,* is a patrolman on the New York City police force who is given a special assignment: to attract, and apprehend, a murderer whose victims are exclusively homosexuals who are "into leather" and whose sexual behavior is, to say the least, bizarre even for the mainstream of the "gay subculture." Burns, who must affect homosexuality and dress in the leathered garb of the little society he has been assigned to infiltrate, finds himself falling into its dark and awful way of life. Even after he catches, and stabs, the murderer, he is unable to get away from the Greenwich Village waterfront that is the center of the sadomasochistic homosexual world. There is even the suggestion, at the film's end, that he may have taken over the role of murderer from Stuart Richards, the schizophrenic Columbia University student responsible for the killings.

The movie misses no opportunity to capitalize on the juiciness of its subject matter. Burns cannot enter a room which is not populated by dozens of homosexual couples kissing or engaging in some disgusting sexual practice. He cannot cross a streetcorner where there are not scores of muscle-bound men scantily clad either in strips of black leather or in garb vaguely resembling the uniform of a Hell's Angel. The camera prowls around like a beserk voyeur, pausing lovingly on men whose tongues are touching, panning across the contorted face of someone being buggered, stopping magisterially over a figure, being whipped, whose arms and legs are bound together. And the murder scenes are dramatized with especial flourish: We hear the knife enter the victim's back, we see the victim's agonized face, we see the knife raised up and plunged down again and again into the victim's body, and at last we see the victim dead, lying amid quarts of his own blood.

Cruising is a movie, then, that derives all of its gruesome fabric from its camera alone, and thus it is not surprising to note that it comes across almost as a silent film with, of course, the necessary musical accompaniment. There are perhaps a hundred lines of dialogue, recited by a cast, headed by Al Pacino as Burns, that seems halfway asleep. In fact, the only performers who stay in mind at all are the obviously homosexual extras, doing that which they almost certainly do even when cameras are not fixed upon them.

Despite the performances of the extras, *Cruising* is not a convincing depiction of this sadomasochistic, unnatural world. It seems clearly the product of a writer-director who has had little or no contact with the real "subculture" he is attempting to portray in such a realistic fashion. And so his movie comes across as the work of a peeping Tom who is peeping at a world he himself has created. *Cruising* shares none of the stomach-turning honesty and conviction of Larry Kramer's satiric novel *Faggots,* nor does it exude the kind of self-hating knowledge that a little British film called *Nighthawks* does. It tells us nothing about the world it shows us at such obscene length. It only shows us what men look like in leather underwear.

What is driving Steve Burns to homosexuality and murder? What has driven Stuart Richards to murder? Why are these people drowning in bestiality and cruelty? Does Friedkin even care? There is, it is true, one moment when Burns' girl friend tells him that his father called. The music pounds ominously, Pacino's eyes drop and his face hardens—but never again is any mention made of the father. Richards kills on command from *his* father, who we subsequently learn has been dead for ten years. So Richards is psychotic. Why then must he be homosexual? What leads him to kill homosexuals? What about Richards himself leads Burns to take over the killing?

There are no answers. There is only the camera prowling incessantly, watching people whose behavior is repellently incomprehensible. In this day of "tolerance" and of easy psychologizing, Friedkin refuses even to give lip service to the irksome questions the movie raises. He refuses because his movie is a work of pornography, in which logic and clarity disappear and sensation becomes everything.

Cruising is surely a landmark in the history of cinematic unpleasantness. Just as the destructive strains in the rock-music world led to the rise of punk-rock and groups like the Sex Pistols, whose lead singer bit the necks of live chickens on stage, so have the escalating trends of sexual "honesty" and "realistic" violence found their apex in the sheer gratuitousness of *Cruising*. The movie forsakes plot, characterization, accurate detail, and all the other things that make movies worthwhile for a two-hour look through a telescope at your neighborhood S-M bar. How entertaining. *Cruising* wants only to nauseate, and it succeeds; in the process, the air is necessarily and evilly befouled. □

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PRESSWATCH

WHERE NEWS IS MADE

by Michael Ledeen

This month's award for runaway prose goes to Lou Cannon and David Broder of the *Washington Post* for their description on February 10 of George Bush's tactics in the New Hampshire primary:

> Without mentioning his principal opponent by name, Bush suggests that some of Reagan's foreign policy pronouncements are dangerously hawkish.
>
> "Ronald Reagan has proposed a blockade of Cuba to stop Russian aggression halfway around the world," Bush said Friday....

To be sure, this sort of thing is supposed to be caught by the copy editor, but one gets the impression that copy editors ought to be on the list of endangered species. The *New York Times,* for example, has gotten terribly sloppy about headlines. Early in February, Clark Clifford was simply called "Clark" in a *Times* headline, and on February 15 the *Times* announced atop a UPI story from Moscow that the "Soviet Decree of Aug. 8 on Sakharov is Printed." The month was January, not August.

You may not think such details are of any lasting importance, but they are of a piece with the generally declining quality of what used to be an excellent newspaper. I have never been a great admirer of the *Washington Post,* but its coverage of Afghanistan has been rather better than that of its New York competitor. And the differences between the two are demonstrated not only by the work of their own editors and correspondents, but also by the choices made by the editors when their own people are not on the scene. Such was the case on January 25, when both papers had to resort to reprinting somebody else's material on Afghanistan. The *Times* picked a Reuters piece that fit nicely with the New Yorkers' view of reality. "The Soviet-backed Afghan Government of Babrak Karmal, in power for four weeks, appears to be quietly trying to win back the confidence of a Moslem people shattered by violence, arbitrary arrests and destruction of its traditions...."

I maintain that no self-respecting newspaper could print such prose. After all, the "violence, arbitrary arrests," etc. were the actions of the previous Soviet puppet regime, and the new one was distinguished from its predecessor by the presence of some 80,000 to 100,000 Soviet troops —hardly what one would call a quiet effort to win confidence. And consider this amazing concluding paragraph:

> Finally, Mr. Karmal may have to indicate his policy line on the crucial question of the 80,000 or so Soviet troops in the country.

It would have been accurate to report that this choice will be made by Mr. Brezhnev, not by comrade Karmal.

On the same day, the *Post* picked up the story written by Anthony Mascarenhas of the London *Sunday Times.* He began with the facts, rather than with an interpretation: "An estimated 4,000 Soviet advisers have flown in here and another 100 are arriving daily to run Afghanistan's government, just as the Red Army is occupying the nation militarily." A bit further on in his story Mascarenhas explained that "the Soviets have taken over the policy-making and executive functions in most departments, although they are nominally under Afghan civil servants." And Mascarenhas even dug out the very significant detail that "the entire [state security bureau] was abolished and rebuilt around 640 Soviet intelligence officers, said to have been drawn mostly from the KGB secret police."

Now one may say that neither story was produced by American reporters, so what's the fuss? The fuss is over the choice of the editors, because that choice tells us something about the view of the Soviet Union dominant in the two newspapers. The American publication I have read recently that most resembles the treatment selected by the *New York Times* is the *Nation,* whose editorial of January 5-12, entitled "The Russians Have Come," is out of an Orwellian dream: "...it would be wrong to blame the weaknesses of the deposed Hafizullah Amin Government on the Moslem guerrillas. In fact, the People's Democratic Party Government, which came into power after the April 1978 coup, was disintegrating from within.... the regime alienated its natural allies among the poor and strengthened the opposition of tribal chiefs and landlords." Not a mention of the 3,000 to 4,000 Soviet "advisers" who manned the ministries even before the Christmas invasion.

The last note of interest from the *Times* this month is from the February 3 "news" section, which contained a totally gratuitous attack on General William Odom of the National Security Council, masquerading as a news story. Written by Charles Mohr, it has all the signs of an in-house spat funneled into the press by an interested party. Consider this, for example:

> Since 1977 the Carter Administration has repeatedly enunciated a policy toward the Soviet Union of "cooperation and competition," but with stress on cooperation.
>
> "Bill has no use for cooperation," a foreign policy official said.

Mohr says at one point that "ideas and not individuals govern," an observation that might be applied with equal justice to the people who cover the news. There was a fascinating juxtaposition of ideas on February 10 on the subject of life in prison. The *Washington Post* ran a predictable story on the carnage from the New Mexico State Penitentiary, written—and very well indeed—by Cynthia Gorney. She wrote it like a movie script: "Sometimes, before the riot, the stabbings were so quiet that all you heard was *poom, poom,* quick in the darkness, muffled and low." The conditions in the prison were textbook cases of dehumanization: overcrowding, demoralized and underpaid guards, bad sanitation. And, in the words of a former inmate quoted by Cynthia Gorney, "When you got absolutely nothing left but your life, and it's worthless, you're capable of anything."

Just about what you might expect, right? Wrong, at least when the prison is in Cuba and the prisoners are American. Mr. Gavin Scott, of the Time-Life News Service, wrote a three-part series on Cuba that was published in the *Washington Star* in February and the last article was headlined, "57 Americans Cramped, Bored in Cuban Prison." The conditions in this medium-security prison outside Havana sound familiar to a reader of the Gorney account in the *Post*: "Between 15 and 18 men are kept in cells that are 13 feet by 18 feet. Water is available only three or four hours a day. The prisoners' toilet is in their cell. Cleansing materials are scarce...." But is this considered dehumanizing? Not at all, for their lives are described as "dreary." Could this have something to do with the sympathies of the reporter for the Castro regime? Perhaps, but it seems more likely to be the result of a lack of thinking and an overreliance on a single word. In the first of the series, Scott tells us that the Soviet ships in the harbor off Morro Castle "are symbols of Cuba's complete economic dependence on the Soviet bloc as the dreary U.S. blockade enters another decade." No suggestion that the dependence is anything more than economic, for the lack of an American economic alternative is given as the explanation for Castro's support of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Perhaps Scott is angling for an editorial spot on the *New York Times.*

Jack Anderson Department: From his secret telephone booth, Anderson announced on February 2 that he had sent "a reporter, Sally Denton, to the Soviet Union to bring an ear closer to the source of the recent turmoil." Moscow sounds a lot like Washington, where the real inside stuff gets leaked on "background." The "reporter, Sally Denton," talked to "a Kremlin leader who asked to be identified only as a 'high-level Communist Party source.'" Not that there

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was anything surprising about the (dis)information that reporter Denton picked up: The Russians told her that they wanted peace and SALT, and that the Americans had overreacted to events in Afghanistan. Anderson sees a "peace offensive" in all this, warning that the Russians are trying to "drive a wedge between the United States and its allies, leaving America increasingly isolated." Fair enough.

Anderson announced three days later that "our armed forces are simply not ready for combat, despite the billions that have been lavished on the defense establishment." This is a curious way to describe the reasons for growing Soviet military superiority, which is due primarily to the vastly higher level of military spending by the Kremlin. Yet Anderson is committed to the view that the Pentagon is overfed, and thus our shortcomings *must* be due to sheer stupidity and waste by the Department of Defense. Even when he cites an accurate evaluation, he draws the wrong conclusion:

> A recent classified [of course!] General Accounting Office internal analysis concludes that "physical size and numbers of opposing aircraft dominate the outcome of air battles, not the sophistication of airborne radars and missiles...."

From this Anderson concludes that our military men, fascinated as they are by "gimmickry," have gone astray and loaded us down with expensive toys rather than with effective weapons. But sometimes the best airplane wins, after all; all that technology is designed for a purpose. Moreover, a lot of the Pentagon's problems are due to the fact that every project must be routed through a paperwork maze that is as difficult to maneuver through as enemy shrapnel. The GAO document cited by Anderson says as much: "The contract and specifications for the Wright Brothers' airplane was a one-page work statement. Just a contract proposal now is often 15,000 to 20,000 pages." But Anderson doesn't ask the obvious question: How can the country be expected to react rapidly to a crisis under these working conditions?

I end with a salute to one of the most careful and professional writers in the business: John K. Cooley of the *Christian Science Monitor*. If there are any journalism schools that still worry about presenting what used to be called "a balanced picture" rather than the current distressing mode of "advocacy journalism," let them require their students to read Cooley's February 4 story on the American ability to fight in the Persian Gulf. Here is everything one wants: the statements of government officials (Defense Secretary Brown, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Jones), their leading critics (Senators Jackson and Byrd), and defense experts with conflicting views. Cooley carefully lines them up, shows the differences of opinion, and says what he is doing: "Exactly how quickly the US could move now, a year from now, and after President Carter's proposed five-year defense buildup (which many congressmen say falls short of what is needed), was spelled out by senior Pentagon officials under ground rules forbidding use of their names...."

Cooley also cites a variety of American and foreign intelligence officials. What is the point? Simply that the official administration spokesmen have all lined up to argue that the President's program is probably sufficient, but most of the people involved in these matters who are not Carter appointees disagree. To get the point, you have to read the story. And you may wish to believe Brown and Jones. But give John Cooley a pin for professionalism. □

CUSTOMER INFORMATION FROM GENERAL MOTORS

HOW TO SAVE YOUR LIFE AND THE ONE NEXT TO YOU

OVERCOMING YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL RESISTANCE TO SEAT BELTS MAY BE THE KEY.

The facts are startling. Experts estimate that about half of all automobile occupant fatalities last year might have been avoided if the people had been wearing seat belts. That's because injuries occur when the car stops abruptly and the occupants are thrown against the car's interior. Belts reduce this risk.

Many people say they know the facts, but they still don't wear belts. Their reasons range all over the lot: seat belts are troublesome to put on, they are uncomfortable, or they wrinkle your clothes. Some people even think getting hurt or killed in a car accident is a question of fate; and therefore, seat belts don't matter.

If you're one of those people who don't use belts for one reason or another, please think carefully about your motivations. Are your objections to seat belts based on the facts or on rationalizations?

Here are a few of the common rationalizations. Many people say they are afraid of being trapped in a car by a seat belt. In fact, in the vast majority of cases, seat belts protect passengers from severe injuries, allowing them to escape more quickly. Another popular rationalization: you'll be saved by being thrown clear of the car. Here again, research has proved that to be untrue—you are almost always safer inside the car.

Some people use seat belts for highway driving, but rationalize it's not worth the trouble to buckle up for short trips. The numbers tell a different story: 80% of all automobile accidents causing injury or death involve cars traveling under 40 miles per hour. And three quarters of all collisions happen less than 25 miles from the driver's home.

When you're the driver, you have the psychological authority to convince all of the passengers that they should wear seat belts. It has been shown that in a car, the driver is considered to be an authority figure. A simple reminder from you may help save someone's life. And please remember children can be severely injured in automobile accidents, too. Make sure Child Restraint Systems are used for children who aren't old enough to use regular seat belts.

Because so many people still don't use their seat belts, the government has directed that some form of passive restraint—one that doesn't require any action by the occupant—be built into every car by the 1984 model year. GM is offering one such restraint—a new type of automatic belt—as an option on the 1980 Chevette to gain insight into its public acceptance.

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EMINENTOES

THE BEST CONGRESSMEN MONEY CAN BUY

by William Lucas

When word got out that the FBI's 23-month, $800,000, 100-agent Abscam investigation had incriminated, among others, at least seven members of the House and one U.S. senator, House Speaker Thomas P. ("Tip") O'Neill was "shocked"—and he was not alone. Democratic Whip John Brademas was "shocked" and Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd was "shocked" and Minority Leader Howard Baker was "shocked," too. O'Neill said the House Ethics Committee was going to have to get to the bottom of all this because the integrity of Congress was at stake. (When the committee did finally meet it was without the Honorable John Murtha, who had himself been implicated in the Abscam investigation.*)

The fact is, however, that rampant corruption in Washington is far from new. That congressional leaders are "shocked" by the revelations of Abscam would itself be shocking, were it to be believed; but their claims not to know that their honorable colleagues were capable of such unethical conduct are as preposterous as their eulogies to the balanced budget and the sorely-pressed taxpayer. Consider a few of the novel fellows involved:

First, there is the Honorable Michael Myers of South Philadelphia. Last year he and some friends were drinking in the cocktail lounge of a northern Virginia hotel when their conduct prompted an admonition from the management for making vulgar remarks to the waitresses. According to police reports, Myers stated that "because he was a congressman, he didn't have to abide by their rules." A fight ensued. The congressman, who didn't have to abide by the rules, slugged a 109-pound waitress in the stomach. Myers' cousin punched out a hotel security guard and the congressman dragged the victim into an elevator, to inflict further punishment. When the fight was over, Myers' cousin dropped his pants, displaying a South Philadelphia moon.

Myers himself headed back to Washington before the police arrived. He awoke on his congressional office couch the next morning to find himself charged with two counts of assault and battery. Thanks to a sympathetic prosecutor, who just happened to be a Democrat, he was let off with a plea of no contest to charges of disorderly conduct. Even so, not a year later Myers was in line for a place on the House Appropriations Committee, ironically enough, the seat of the Honorable Daniel Flood, who had resigned before pleading mental incompetence in a hearing to determine whether he should stand trial on charges that he had channeled federal grants to those who paid him bribes. It was at this point that Myers experimented again with the boundaries of congressional immunity—this time by allegedly accepting $50,000 from FBI agents.

The Honorable John Jenrette was already a member of the Appropriations Committee when he was filmed accepting Abscam bribes. He, too, has been down this road before. First, his name was linked to a major marijuana smuggling investigation, which ended up with his former campaign manager going to prison. Then a grand jury examined allegations that the congressman had been involved in the sale of some beach property which purchasers discovered to be not next to, but *in,* the ocean. Jenrette was not indicted, but the foreman of the grand jury was, for slipping details of the investigation to his congressman and working inside the jury on Jenrette's behalf. Still another grand jury is now investigating Jenrette on charges that he used his congressional employees to sell real estate.

Jenrette's improbity does not stop there, however. He was, for instance, a renowned philanderer. When his former wife was petitioning for a divorce, she complained that Jenrette had had relations with 22 different women. A Washington gossip columnist reported him relieved that so few of his exploits had been discovered. Jenrette also tends to drink too much, a proclivity he has recently tried to use to his best advantage. "I was in bad shape," he told reporters, when explaining his inability to recall his relation to $50,000 and Abscam. "It was a full moon and I had three drinks. Or I had three drinks and it was a half moon."

Unfortunately, Senator Harrison Williams doesn't have that excuse anymore. He decided to quit drinking a few years back when he found himself incapable of forming sentences during his keynote address at an NAACP convention. His taste for money appears to have gone unchecked, however. The FBI apparently caught him accepting, through a surrogate, shares in a titanium mine, in exchange for promising government contracts to ensure the mine's prosperity. Williams is chairman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee.

The Honorable Frank Thompson is chairman of the House Administration Committee, which approves congressional expense accounts. That alone should have induced his colleagues to suspect his ethics, although if it wasn't enough, two years ago Thompson admitted to taking so-called campaign contributions from South Korean lobbyist Tongsun Park. Allegedly, his share of the Abscam money was $50,000, although he let a friend pick it up for him.

The Honorable John Murphy is another committee chairman, specifically, of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. According to *Time* magazine, he has been accused of using his chairmanship to solicit political contributions. Moreover, the Justice Department has been investigating him for having failed to report himself as a lobbyist for foreign interests. In his way, Murphy is smart. He keeps a device in his congressional desk which tells him whether a visitor is wired to record him.

No one has ever accused the Honorable Richard Kelly of being smart, but many have questioned his sanity. When he was a Florida judge, a judicial commission ordered him to undergo psychiatric examination. Supposedly he passed, although soon after he won election to the House, dropped wife number three for wife number four, and overspent his $290,000 congressional office allowance. Even so, he's a stickler for appearance. The Abscam videotape shows that when he took his $25,000 in cash, he was careful to place the bills in his pockets without creating a wrinkle in his suit.

The principals in this morally repellent affair are bad enough, but those who would defend them disingenuously, or worse, would shift the blame away from Capitol Hill, are little better. One such is the Honorable William Alexander. "Congress reflects the image of the American people," Alexander explained. "Most of the people up here are of high moral character."

This last statement, as far as Alexander is concerned, is only a matter of hearsay. In 1973 Alexander drove his station wagon into a National Airport policeman who had made

* The Sunday morning after the Abscam story broke, the Ethics Committee's chairman, Charles Bennett, announced that he had already established a subcommittee to investigate congressional bribe-taking, although he later revealed, in response to the outrage of his colleagues, who knew nothing of the investigation, that there had actually been no investigation and no subcommittee until he picked up his Sunday newspaper. "I just didn't want the press and the country telling me what to do when I could do it myself," he explained.

William Lucas is a writer living in Washington, D.C.

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the mistake of believing that traffic rules apply equally to congressional vehicles. (Alexander said he only "nudged" the officer with his station wagon to demonstrate "which way [he] wanted to go.") The officer filed charges of assault against Alexander and, like most Americans, was content to let justice take its course—except that it didn't. Congressman Wayne Hays (to resign three years later under the impetus of his own scandalous imbroglio), with Alexander at his side, convened an investigation of law enforcement at the National Airport. The charges against Alexander were dropped soon after. Alexander himself was appointed to the House Appropriations Committee, where he could oversee funding for the National Airport.

When Senator David Pryor voiced concern over the way the press had played up the details of the videotapes before they could be seen by judges and juries, one could not help remembering that when Pryor himself, as a young congressman, had disguised himself as a nurse's aide to investigate unsavory practices in nursing homes, every newspaper in Arkansas had the details of his investigation before the evidence could be conveyed to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. And the publicity certainly didn't hurt his campaign for the Senate soon after.

The "concern" over Abscam does not stop at pre-trial publicity, however, but extends to outrage over the "entrapment" practiced by the FBI, despite the fact that its victims sometimes traveled hundreds of miles to jump into the trap. "If we allow this to go on," said Representative John Seiberling, "no one is safe in this country." The ACLU was not far behind: "If the FBI went into a small town in Kansas and created the opportunity for people to buy drugs, when there had been no history of drugs in that town, the people there would be outraged."

Seiberling, the ACLU, and the many people who share their view of things would probably prefer that the Abscam prosecution be handled in the manner of Koreagate, that is to say, with no videotapes and precious little investigation. Certainly Jack Flynt, who presided over the House Ethics Committee's Koreagate investigation, understood what a congressman could do with impunity. About two years before Koreagate he had leased a piece of farmland in Georgia to the Ford Motor Company for $12,500, an amount that staggered the imagination of his neighbors, and then voted to weaken auto emissions standards for the auto industry.

In light of all this, it is not surprising that the Abscam investigation was leaked to the press. Some prosecutor or FBI agent may have considered the results of the Koreagate investigation or the case of the Honorable Michael Myers and concluded that something can happen to airtight cases before they come to trial. In New Jersey, for example, there were reports that the U.S. Attorney—appointed on the recommendation of Harrison Williams—initially questioned whether the case against the senator was worthy of prosecution.

But the leak didn't prevent congressmen from trying to serve themselves instead of justice. A few days after Abscam was disclosed, attorneys for the U.S. House of Representatives secretly went to the U.S. Court of Appeals and later the U.S. Supreme Court to seek a ruling that members of Congress do not have to respond to federal grand jury subpoenas for House records. The House lost its appeal, and when the press reported this extraordinary legal exercise, we were assured it had nothing to do with Abscam. So much for the probity of our high elected officials. □

No More Free Ride... For Union Officials.

Thanks to Harry Beck, American workers no longer have to support unwanted candidates or undesired political causes to keep their jobs.

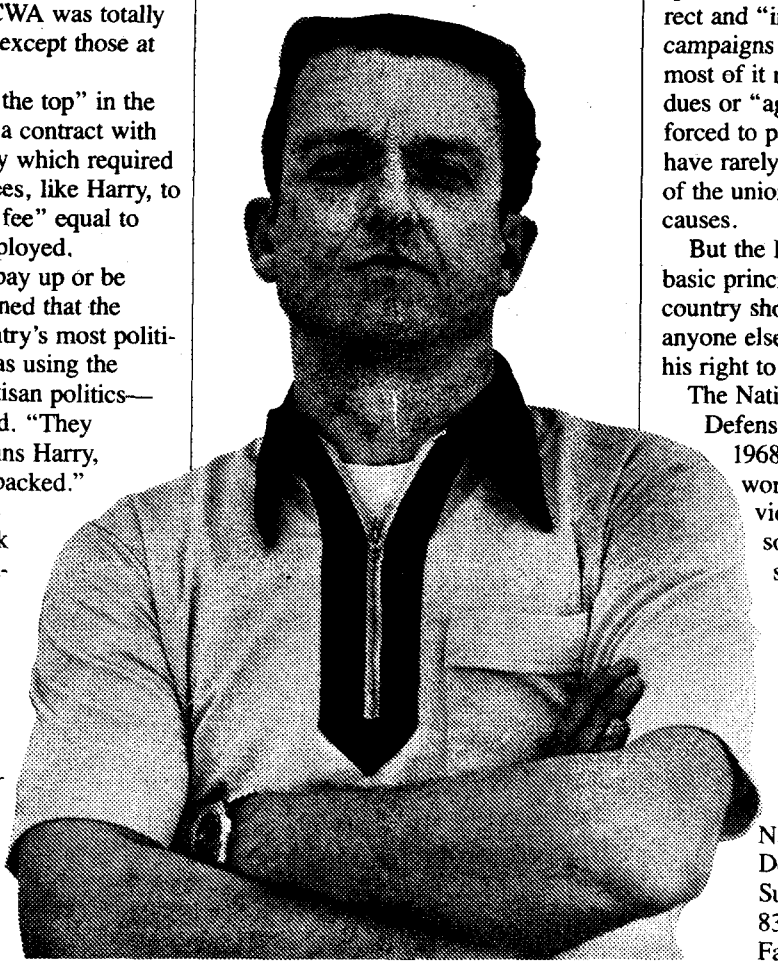
Harry, who was born and grew up in LaPlata, Maryland, has worked for the telephone company for 19 years. He once belonged to the Communications Workers of America union, but resigned "because the CWA was totally impersonal to anyone except those at the top."

However, "those at the top" in the union then negotiated a contract with the telephone company which required all non-union employees, like Harry, to pay CWA an "agency fee" equal to union dues to stay employed.

Harry Beck had to pay up or be fired. But then he learned that the CWA, one of the country's most politically active unions, was using the "agency fees" for partisan politics—and that made him mad. "They backed people," explains Harry, "I just wouldn't have backed."

With the help of the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, suit was brought against the CWA union by Harry and 19 other telephone company workers. And on March 16, 1979, in an historic decision, a Federal court ruled that a union's collecting or spending of compulsory fees for any purpose other than collective bargaining violates the Constitutional rights of employees who object.

It was the first time that a Federal court had declared that union political spending from mandatory "agency fees" is an infringement upon the rights to free speech and association enjoyed by private sector workers.



Similar protection was established for public employees in 1978 in the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*—another case supported by the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation.

The potential impact of the two decisions is enormous. Union officials spend an estimated $100 million in direct and "in-kind" support on political campaigns in a single election year—most of it raised through compulsory dues or "agency fees." The workers forced to pay for this political support have rarely any voice in the selection of the union favored candidates or causes.

But the Beck decision reaffirms the basic principle that no worker in a free country should ever have to support anyone else's politics in order to retain his right to work.

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, established in 1968, provides free legal aid to workers whose rights have been violated as a result of compulsory unionism. It is presently supporting more than 100 court cases involving the rights of employees across the nation.

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BOOK REVIEWS

SMALL FUTURES: CHILDREN, INEQUALITY, AND THE LIMITS OF LIBERAL REFORM

Richard H. deLone for the Carnegie Council on Children
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich / $12.95

Steven Lagerfeld

Not too many years ago, in simpler times, there were basically two kinds of books: highbrow and lowbrow. The distinction, derived from modernism in the arts, was based on the kind of audience an author intended to address. Highbrow books were the province of critics and *cognoscenti*; lowbrow books were intended for everyone else. Of the many hybrid varieties that have developed since, the eyebrow book, the book written solely to be reviewed, is surely the most curious.

The name is again derived from the author's intention, which in this case is simply to raise eyebrows, to attract attention to a particular point of view. Typically, the eyebrow book has no readership to speak of, save critics and reviewers (and one sometimes wonders about even them). Its purpose is to be reviewed and discussed in the appropriate magazines and newspapers so that its main points can ease, familiar but unexamined, into the intellectual debate, such as it is.

The federal government pioneered this field in the 1960s with its elaborate white-paper reports, written by a host of social scientists with good "name recognition factors" who nevertheless managed to commit a startling number of mistakes and misinterpretations, which were discovered only much later. In the last few years, however, the government has increasingly withdrawn from the eyebrow business and private foundations have moved in. Which brings us—take a deep breath—to the Report of the Carnegie Council on Children, *Small Futures: Children, Inequality, and the Limits of Liberal Reform,* by Richard H. deLone. The bookjacket copy fondly recalls that the Council's previous book, *All Our Children,* "was published to wide acclaim and front-page recognition," apparently an exercise in eyebrow greasing.

Kenneth Keniston, executive director of the Council, author of its previous book, and its main celebrity, quickly announces in his foreword to *Small Futures* an attack on "economic and political liberalism—not the 'liberalism' of one wing of the Democratic Party, but that deep and largely implicit set of assumptions shared by both major parties and by the overwhelming majority of Americans, a world view whose origins lie in the thought of men such as Adam Smith and John Locke." DeLone goes on to claim that there is a fundamental contradiction in liberalism, between its affirmation of political equality and its failure to deliver economic equality, which cannot be resolved and is therefore displaced upon the young. Reformers, he says, have forever sought to achieve their goals in the next generation, by focusing on the improvement of the young. Their record, he argues, is one of consistent failure; inequality persists and can only be remedied through structural reform.

This amounts to something like intellectual forced entry into the issue, for the contradiction deLone sees in liberalism simply does not exist. Liberalism promises equal economic and political rights—the right to property and the right to vote, for instance—with the full expectation that inequalities will exist in the outcomes. That much, certainly, is explicit in the thought of "men such as Adam Smith and John Locke." And when deLone goes on to fault reformers for rejecting economic equality as a goal but also for accepting it and failing to achieve it, one begins to wonder whether the root of this muddled understanding of liberalism lies in confusion or convenience.

DeLone's depiction of the nature of inequality in a liberal society presents similar problems. His America is a rigid, highly stratified, "caste society" in which poverty is extensive and upward mobility for the poor is limited. Inequality is static in that the poor stay poor. Yet many of the scholars upon whom deLone relies in drawing this picture—for example, Seymour Martin Lipset, Stephan Thernstrom, and Christopher Jencks—will have difficulty recognizing the final canvas. As several reviewers, including Michael Harrington (in an otherwise favorable review), have noted, deLone's reading of his sources is selective and careless, or, I would again suggest, perhaps simply convenient. Inequality is not so static as deLone would have us believe, nor is mobility so limited; the people who were poor yesterday are not often found among those who are poor today.

Nevertheless, deLone formulates a "situational theory of child development" to explain why the poor stay poor. He argues that the children of the poor are constantly bombarded by cultural signals and other evidence of the hopelessness of their plight, and realistically turn their backs on traditional avenues of upward mobility, particularly education. One could almost have made such a case regarding black children at one time, but the income of black families has been rising rapidly for almost two decades now. And if black youths feel they confront "small futures," they are certainly not acting like it. Between 1966 and 1976 black college enrollment, to take one example, almost quadrupled. In 1976, blacks made up 10.7 percent of the college population, as opposed to only 4.6 percent in 1966, and in some family income groups, such as the $5,000 to $9,000 range, a larger proportion of blacks (17 percent) were enrolled than whites (15 percent). If deLone detects cultural signals of hopelessness, it is probably because he and his colleagues are listening to their own broadcasts.

Finally, there are deLone's own proposals for "reform," including a full employment policy and improved, expanded services. His chief proposal, however, is for a program of redistributive taxation that would insure each family an annual income equal to one-half the median income for a family of its size ($8,400 for a family of four)—hardly a radical idea given the polemic that precedes it and the programs already under consideration by all kinds of liberal reformers. But in the very last pages it turns out that this surely will not be enough, that perhaps the most important issues are "the basic content of day-to-day experience and human relations . . . that might well constitute the future themes of egalitarian policy." DeLone avoids describing the implications of such a program, but clearly the state would be called upon to direct his reform of everyday life. It is a frightening thought.

Small Futures is indeed a frightening book, and also a poorly argued, less-than-honest one. One can but wonder how the Carnegie Council on Children came to endorse this ominous work, but in undertaking to peddle it to the public, the Council would now seem to have an obligation to explain what "future themes of egalitarian policy" it intends to pursue, and how. □

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ROUSSEAU'S STATE OF NATURE: AN INTERPRETATION OF THE *DISCOURSE ON INEQUALITY*

Marc F. Plattner / Northern Illinois University Press / $7.50

Alan J. Eade

In his *Treason of the Intellectuals,* Julien Benda thought it necessary to "repeat that throughout this work I am considering the teaching of Nietzsche (and Hegel's too) in so far as it has become the pretext for a great moral preaching, though I know perfectly well that in reality this teaching is something far more complex."

Students of Rousseau can easily applaud Benda's qualification; for few books "that in reality" are "far more complex" have occasioned more preaching and howling than have Rousseau's. Rousseau the apostle of unfettered individualism and Rousseau the precursor of totalitarianism—these are familiar rallying cries, not the conclusions of careful scholarship.

To be sure, Rousseau is not altogether guiltless for misreadings of his writings. He enlivens his prose but muddles his meaning with paradoxes and flamboyancies; and he never captures any prizes for consistency in terminology. Even at his most lucid, Rousseau is not above contradicting himself. That he wrote a great deal and in different modes—*Emile* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse,* for instance, are full-length romances—has only encouraged those who judge a banquet by the item or two they deign to taste.

Marc Plattner, no mere sampler, brings a healthy appetite to his study of Rousseau. Though *Rousseau's State of Nature* is subtitled "An Interpretation of the *Discourse on Inequality,*" Plattner concerns himself with more than one book; for he contends that a proper understanding of Rousseau's doctrine about the state of nature, a doctrine most fully elaborated in the *Discourse on Inequality,* informs a proper understanding of Rousseau's later books. Thus, despite its shortness (137 pages) and its ostensibly modest project, Plattner's book elucidates a teaching that rightly "lies at the very heart of [Rousseau's] entire theoretical enterprise."

That enterprise consists in attaining knowledge of a legitimate political order, that is, an order in which men can be both genuine individuals and good citizens. For Rousseau, knowledge of such an order presupposes an analysis of the state of nature, of man before he took on the incubus of civilization. Studying "original man," Rousseau asserts, "is . . . the only good means one could use to remove those crowds of difficulties which present themselves concerning the origin of moral inequality, the true foundations of the body politic, the reciprocal rights of its members, and a thousand similar questions as important as they are ill explained."

The central question remains, as Plattner aptly notes, just how a study of man in the state of nature pertains to "those crowds of difficulties." Rousseau's answer goes to the root: because natural man was a solitary wild beast that lacked language, reason, virtues, and vices, no man could exercise authority over other men; for authority has meaning only when men have dealings with one another.* In other words, Rousseau rejects both the traditional Aristotelian position that man is by nature a political animal and the supposedly radical Hobbesian view that the state of nature is a war "of every man, against every man." Neither Aristotle's assertion that some men are by nature slaves nor Hobbes' argument that only a leviathan can overcome the strife of the state of nature withstands Rousseau's conclusion that no political order can point to nature for its justification. ➞

Alan J. Eade lives in Baltimore.

* Present-day analytic philosophers might argue that Rousseau's state of nature could never have existed: By definition, men speak and, therefore, reason; thus, before language there were apes, not men. Konrad Lorenz reaches the same conclusion by a different route: "All the tremendous neuro-sensory apparatus of human speech is phylogenetically evolved, but so constructed that its function presupposes the existence of a culturally developed language which the infant has to learn."

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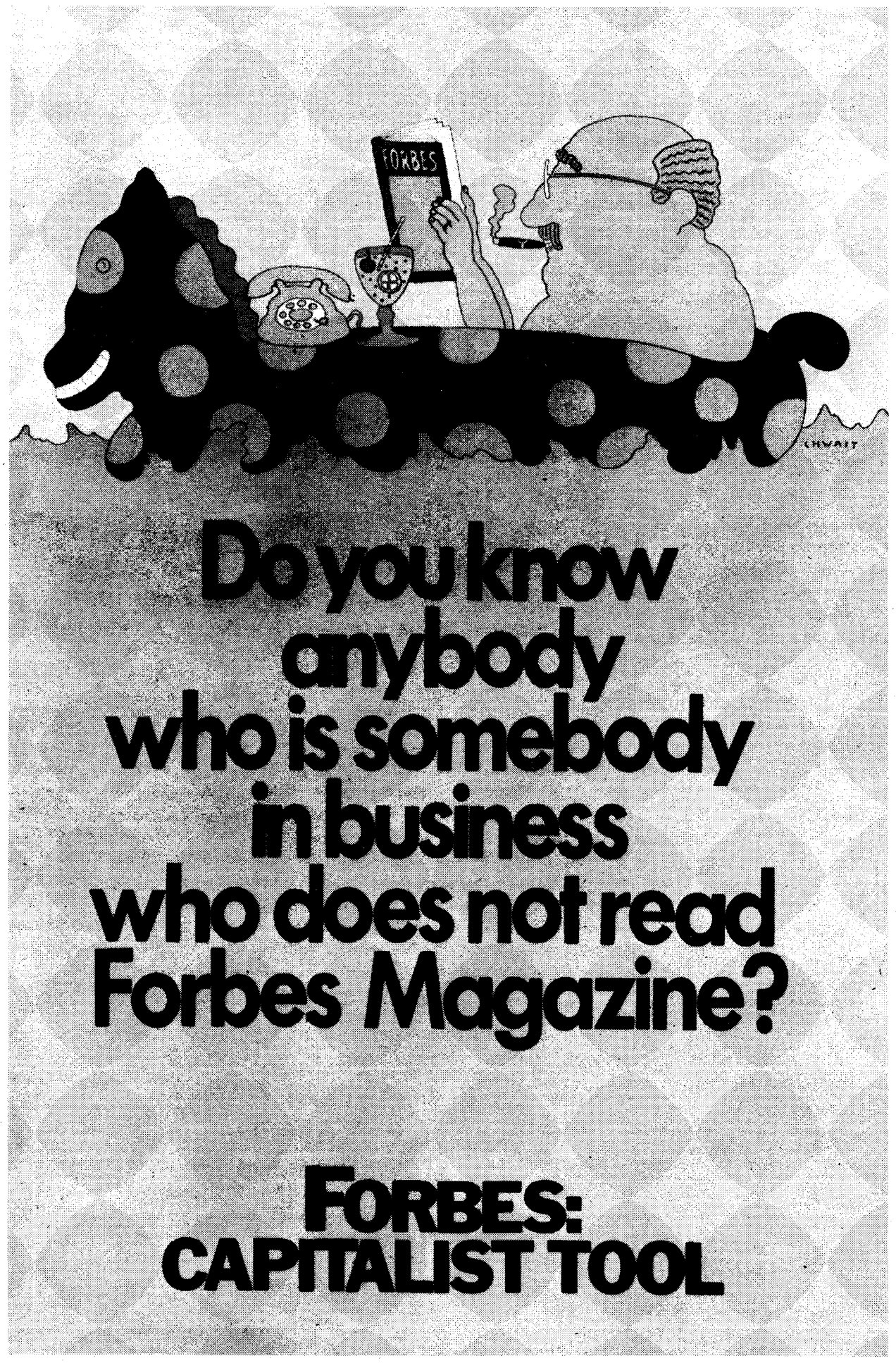
But if "original man" was just another wild beast, and a stupid, solitary one at that, how did he ever emerge from the state of nature and come to develop the arts and sciences? If monkeys and wolves have remained in their natural condition, can it not be argued that something in man's nature must have predisposed him to civilization and its trappings, including political authority? Must not this something be reason, the very faculty celebrated by Aristotle and Hobbes?

Rousseau concedes that reason propelled man out of the state of nature and into civilization. But, again, reason is not natural to man; rather, it is one of the "artificial faculties," a result of "the different accidents" that allowed man to go beyond his beast-like beginnings. Though a product of chance, reason sticks; and it transforms man as it transforms civilization. Thus, man cannot return to the innocence of the state of nature, to that simple harmony with himself. For Rousseau, then, as Plattner persuasively argues, the state of nature is a *historical* account of man's beginnings, not a mere construct of what things could still be like should political authority crumble. In short, man is the historical animal.



If not from nature, then, how can men justify political rule? Plattner summarizes Rousseau's answer this way:

> Political authority, insofar as it is not wholly without foundation—that is, illegitimate—must be based on the agreement of those subject to that authority. Men who are naturally free and equal cannot owe any obligation to other men unless that obligation is created by their own consent. The only possible foundation for the right to exercise political rule is an agreement or contract on the part of those involved.

The social contract is thus an answer to a question in the realm of "right," that is, in the realm of morality in which reasoning man chooses from alternative ways of treating his fellows. By contrast, nature is the realm of brute fact; indeed, by speaking of animals as "brutes," we acknowledge their purely physical, non-reasoning, and, therefore, non-moral being. Whether Rousseau's social contract and its attendant theory of consent resolve the problem of political obligation is a question Plattner does not take up.

Plattner does take up, and with penetration, a particularly troublesome aspect of Rousseau's argument. If, as Rousseau holds, the gap between the state of nature and political society is greater than even Hobbes thought, then political society is correspondingly more unnatural—that is, the result of artifice—than Hobbes imagined. Advanced political society, therefore, requires a human "nature" that differs greatly from the one that man showed in his original condition. Rousseau puts it this way in *Emile*: "Good social institutions are those that are best able to denature man."

The danger, of course, lies in thinking that human art can readily reconstruct political society. Rousseau hardly escapes falling into such a "maximalist" delusion; he writes the following about the art that most founders of civil society displayed: "People incessantly mended, whereas it would have been necessary to begin by clearing the area and setting aside all the old materials, as Lycurgus did in Sparta, in order to raise a good edifice afterward."

Marc Plattner's book is far more complex and illuminating than I can betoken in a few words. Even those readers who question its conclusions should admire the regard for Rousseau's elusiveness that Mr. Plattner shows in arriving at them. Those who withhold such credit prove only that brutishness is not peculiar to men in the state of nature. □

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LOOKING FOR WORK
Susan Cheever / Simon & Schuster / $8.95

Joshua Gilder

Somebody expects Susan Cheever's tale of fashionable Angst in the New York woman to be hot stuff. *Redbook* has excerpted it, the Literary Guild has chosen it an alternate selection, and Warner Brothers has bought up the movie rights. For those with neither the time nor the patience to read the whole novel, herewith the salient points of *Looking for Work*: Leonard Bernstein, Norman Mailer, Elaine's, opening at the Whitney, Christo, Robert Rauschenberg drinking Jack Daniels (you were perhaps wondering his brand?), Guccis, summer in Ezé with Lord and Lady Moulting, a psychoanalyst copping a feel, Ladoucette chilling in a silver bucket, Ladoucette at the Carlyle with famous author, sex with famous author, sex with famous sculptor, sex at the Harvard Club, Elsa Peretti diamond earrings, Cartiers, lunch at...

Thus unfolds the story of Sally Gardens, her marriage to the nebbish Jason (who has, nevertheless, a very attractive trust fund), and her various affairs, most especially her lusting after "burly," monosyllabic, "I-want-to-fuck-you-Sally" Max. Max Angelo is a real ***man***, not like her weakling husband, who, depressed by Sally's obvious infidelities, gets drunk at parties and doesn't even know, the poor slob, that Max is making a fool of him. Lest one feel any sympathy for the man, here is a passage showing just what Sally had to put up with:

After dinner we piled into the Konovers' car and headed uptown on Madison Avenue.

"Off to the prestigious Carlyle Hotel!" roared John, weaving through the midtown traffic. "I am embarking on a search for the perfect bar."

"And I," proclaimed Seymour, "I am looking for a man with no redeeming sense of social value."

"Seymour, I think you've found him at last," said John in mock earnest voice.

Hilarity. In the middle of laughing I looked over at Jason sitting next to me in the back seat. He was asleep.

What a boring person! Imagine falling asleep during such lively conversation! It's enough to drive any self-respecting woman, especially one with Elsa Peretti diamond earrings and a Koos Van den Akker dress, not to mention a budding feminist consciousness (it goes very fashionably with the whole outfit, don't you think?), into the arms of a world famous sculptor. And then Jason is often so unsure of himself, while Max is always in such perfect command. Their affair begins at a New York opening where, Sally's friend assures her, the other women will "all be practically naked."

I steer myself toward [Max] and he sees me and suddenly the knots of people break apart and he comes toward me and everything is all right.

"Thank God you've gotten here," he says. "I told you it would be boring."

We push toward the bar and without asking what I want to drink, Max orders two Chivas Regals straight up.

"Yes, Mr. Angelo," the bartender says.

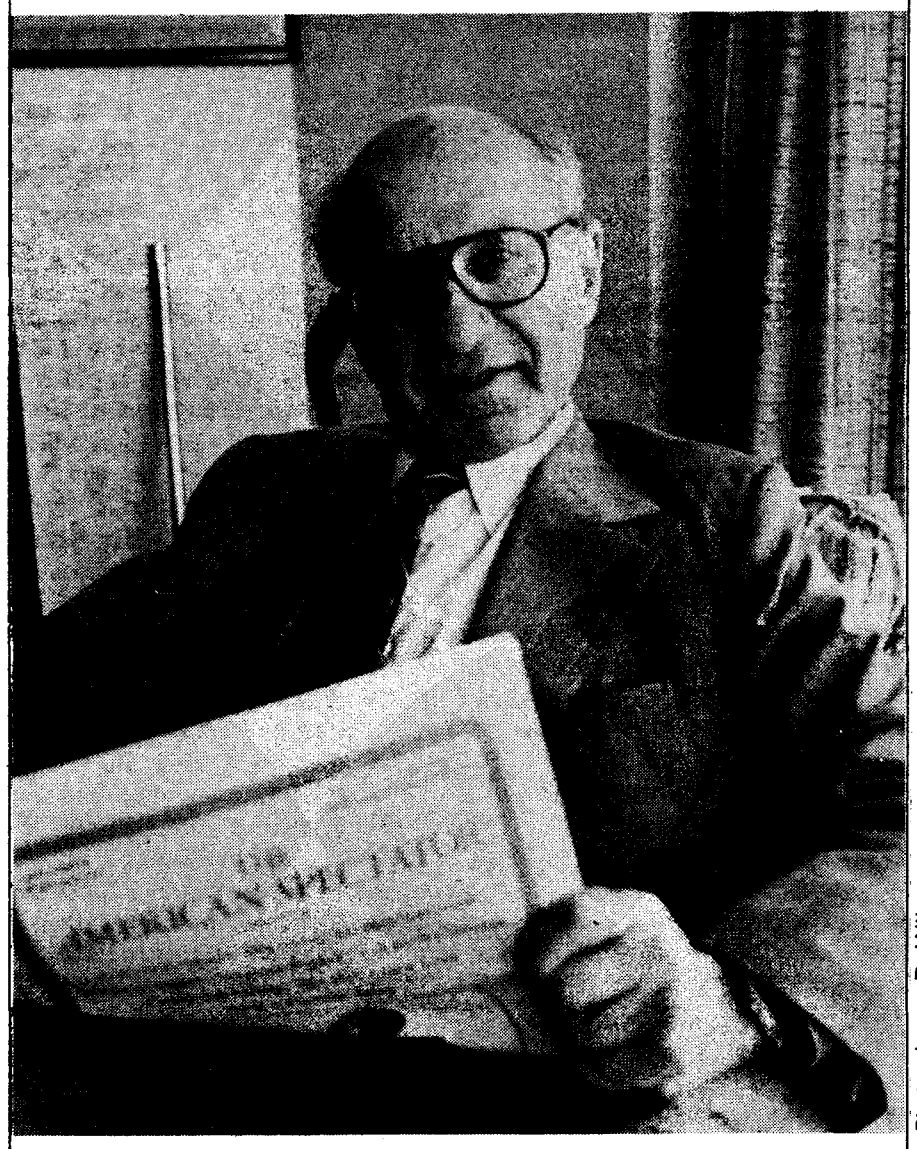
Doesn't it make your toes tingle? Then it's off to Sally's apartment and it's "Head over heels over head and then we are in bed and..." Discretion compels me to draw the curtain at this moment on Sally and Max, but for more than the usual reason.

Some writers describe food in such a way as to inspire hunger in even the most sated after-dinner reader. Hemingway, for one, comes to mind. Others, with even the simplest description, induce nausea. The difference is hard to pin down, but the effect is unmistakable. The same is true with sex. The genuinely erotic description is a mysterious thing. So, too, is its opposite. Susan Cheever's bedtime interludes, more than unerotic, are decidedly unpleasant. One feels suddenly prudish and would "rather not know." Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that Sally's most satisfying, intimate relationship is with Valdi, her dog. She certainly prefers Valdi's company to that of her husband: "When [Jason] leaves on Sunday night I dance through the empty rooms in my underwear with Valdi scampering behind me. Free, I am free."

Sally doesn't actually do much looking for work. She mostly looks for

Joshua Gilder is a writer living in New York.

Who reads The American Spectator?



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Milton Friedman.

ALSO: Paul McCracken, Brock Yates, Albert Shanker, Ray Price, James Wechsler, John Roche, Lewis Lapham, Norman Podhoretz, Jack Kemp, John Chamberlain, Edith Efron, Henry Salvatori, David Meiselman, Martin Peretz, Jeff MacNelly, John Lukacs, William Rusher, Antonio Martino, Malcolm Muggeridge, Doris Grumbach, Colin Welch, Robert Bleiberg, James Jackson Kilpatrick, Jude Wanniski, Gen. A.C. Wedemeyer, James L. Buckley, Ben Wattenberg, Neal Kozodoy, Alan Reynolds, Walter Goodman, Harry Jaffa, William Safire, Charles Peters, Jeffrey Hart, Irving Kristol, David Packard, Henry Fairlie, Jean-François Revel, Richard M. Nixon, Robert Nisbet, Leonard Garment, Norman Mailer, Frank Shakespeare, Malcolm S. Forbes, Jr., Melvin Lasky, Ronald Reagan, Anne Armstrong, James R. Schlesinger, Richard Whalen, Dana Andrews, Midge Decter, William E. Simon, Ernest van den Haag, James Q. Wilson, Lewis Lehrman, Woody Allen, Nathan Glazer, William F. Buckley, Jr., Thomas Murphy, William Proxmire, Suzanne Weaver, Maj. Gen. George S. Patton III, Elliott Abrams, Patrick Buchanan, Patrick Cosgrave, John Lofton, Larry Flynt, M. Stanton Evans, Huntington Cairns, Allard Lowenstein, Herb Stein, William Baroody, Tom Wolfe, William Randolph Hearst, Jr., Michael Kinsley, Tom Winter, Gerald R. Ford, Henry Regnery, Roger Rosenblatt, Richard Lugar, Anthony Harrigan, Robert L. Bartley, S.I. Hayakawa, Luigi Barzini, Nelson Polsby, Joseph Coors, Peregrine Worsthorne, Tom Charles Huston, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Clare Boothe Luce, Clay La Force, Roger Milliken, Edward Banfield, Victor Lasky, Raymond Aron, Roy Cohn, Joseph Hazan, Eugene V. Rostow, Michael Novak, Thomas Sowell, Gen. Alexander Haig, Randolph Richardson, George Will, Sidney Hook, Richard Perle, James Hitchcock, Philip Crane, Schmuel Moyal, Hugh Kenner, Eric Hoffer, Tom Stoppard, Charlton Heston, Jim Fallows, Alan Abelson, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and many others.

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men to have affairs with, and sometimes, as with her cocaine-sniffing *Village Voice* editor, this eventually leads to work. She does make a few half-hearted attempts at job interviews, but prefers to spend her days brushing her dog and wishing her husband's trust fund were bigger. To *fill time*, Sally also tries to write. But she has a problem, as she explains in this paragraph:

> I can't write about New York because a thousand other writers have pummeled the city's images into clichés. The Salvation Army Bands on the corners at Christmas time. The reflections of the Fifth Avenue penthouses in the Central Park sailboat pond where I walk Valdi. Children in crisp private-school uniforms parading with their model boats. Long-legged career girls bobbing to the bus these cool, early autumn mornings, and soon, snow falling softly on the skaters at Rockefeller Center.

Is this all there is to New York, or do the city's boundaries extend beyond the author's experience?

If it's tough for Sally being a writer, with those other writers grabbing up all the images and turning them into clichés before she gets a chance, she needn't worry: She does very well inventing her own. "Head over heels over head" must be her favorite, guessing from the number of times she repeats it. She even uses Vonnegut's instant cliché, "So it goes," and, at the risk of giving away the ending to Max and Sally's torrid love affair, we can see in this passage how Ms. Cheever, through her protagonist, wraps up her whole novel into one skillfully packaged cliché:

> But there is no going back and unraveling those old mistakes, although there are plenty of times now when I don't think I'll ever get married, or have children, or love anyone again in the wonderful simple he'll-take-care-of-me way that I loved Jason once. Or ever love again at all, really. I'm not very tough, if you must know, but that's a secret.

Perhaps the most striking thing about Sally Gardens is her confusion, the whorl of undigested ideas knocking about inside her head. Nowhere is this clearer than in this interior monologue, well worth quoting at length:

> In the Village Voice today I read a story about how marriage is really just a form of prostitution. I am very suggestible.... It's hard to be tactful about having someone depend on you for money, I suppose. Especially now that we all think that money is power. Mendicants are no longer saintly men. If you are supporting another person financially, how can you justify it? How can you feel, and how can you make them feel, that their presence alone is worth money to you? Especially if you have no children, or if they are grown. It can't be that you are paying for their body in bed....How can it work anyway, this money business between men and women? Why do some people pay for other people if not in return for services rendered? Charity is no longer saintly either. Is marriage just another exercise in acquisition, with markdowns on older models and racks of possible purchases displayed to their best advantage? Is courtship just another hype? You've got me.

Clearly, the girl is bordering on a severe case of anomie. She swallows whole all the fashionable platitudes and cynicisms fed to her, but there is no mediating consciousness to make sense of them. She has no center, and like all such people she is grasping, selfish, and acquisitive, trying to fill up an empty self with things. Thus everything in the novel seems to be either a fashion plate or a cliché, the prefabricated articles of experience.

It is probably important to mention the autobiographical element of *Looking for Work* in order to understand to what extent the author may be accountable for the idiocies of her heroine. A glance at the dustjacket reveals some obvious points in common between Ms. Cheever and Sally Gardens, but more telling is the boastfully confessional, Erica Jong-like "look what a naughty girl I am" quality of the novel. It reads very much like a diary, and an unexpurgated one at that.

It is said about former President Johnson that he would hold interviews while seated on the toilet, symbolically asserting his dominance in a most effective way. Some writing is a lot like that, as when it unloads on the reader the minutiae of the author's life through a fictional stand-in. *Looking for Work* is a good example of this. Moreover, behind Sally Garden's arrogance and exhibitionism lies a good bit of anger and resentment. Why? Who knows, but one certainly pities the poor male who falls into such a web. Inevitably he is left, like Jason, pauperized by alimony and vegetarian by necessity.

Through Sally Gardens, Susan Cheever shows herself to be not so much the exponent of feminism as its logical product, a result of the contemporary attack on the family and the replacement of the sacrament of marriage with the structures of the marketplace. In this sense "looking for work" is an appropriate title for her novel. For while in traditional terms her protagonist does little job-hunting, it is clear that in her novel personal and fictional experience, private and public life, have become identical. In such a way do love affairs become job interviews. □

CONSTITUTIONAL INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS OF THE USA IN THE SPHERE OF FOREIGN POLICY

Yuri I. Nyporko / Naukova Dumka / 95 Kopeks

Albert L. Weeks

Traditionally, Kremlin ideologists have depicted American "bourgeois-democratic" political institutions as charades for deluding the masses. In American government, they claimed, there can be no genuine separation of powers, no checks and balances. Presidents function as mouthpieces of "monopoly capitalism." Congress, as Lenin said of England's Parliament, is a "rich men's club." As to Republicans and Democrats generally, they follow where the monopolists lead them. The Constitution itself, a "scrap of paper," serves as a shield defending propertied interests from the rage of the workers. To quote *The Law of the Soviet State,* Andrei Vishinsky's *magnum opus,* which is still cited by Soviet jurists as the authoritative work on law: "The Constitution of the U.S.A. obscures the exploitative character of the state."

Such, anyway, *was* the message. Beginning in the early 1960s, a few Soviet spokesmen began to point to "realistic tendencies" appearing within, of all places, the "ruling bourgeoisie" of America. Realists, they said, could be found, even if rarely, in Congress. They might even sometimes speak out against the *besheniye,* the "hotheads." While the realists perceived that non-belligerence and cooperation could keep the world free of thermonuclear war and local conflicts, while encouraging the forces of "social progress," the hotheads spoke "unrealistically" and anachronistically of maintaining American "positions of strength" throughout the world. As the 1960s progressed, the *besheniye* were seen to err in thinking that, in the face of the "changed correlation of forces in favor of Socialism" internationally, Communist-backed "offensives against the positions held by imperialism" (cant in Soviet writings on strategy since 1965, when Brezhnev first pronounced it) could be stopped.

Still, in the early days of the Brezhnev regime, no one went so far—in print, anyway—as to suggest that American governmental institutions *per se* had somehow changed. They remained fundamentally the same: tools of big business and the Pentagon. John Kenneth Galbraith and C. Wright Mills, some of whose writings have long since been translated into Russian, were, and are, often cited as authorities for this view.

In the 1970s, especially with détente, official writings began to suggest that something other than perfect harmony prevailed in the "governmental apparat" of the United States—that basic tensions might, and did, arise between the two great branches of government in Washington, the legislative and executive. "Realistically-minded" congressmen and senators were singled out for meritorious conduct: Robert F. Kennedy, George McGovern, Wayne Morse, William Fulbright, Mike Mansfield, Frank Church, even Jacob Javits. (Ralph Nader was also given special commendation.) Such "prominent figures" understood the real balance of forces in the world. They perceived that America could no longer assert its power, and their favorite example was Vietnam, where the U.S. had attempted in vain to "roll back the inevitable course of history." Such "Solons" might actually stand up to the President, even if he was of the same party.

Thus, Soviets writing on American politics came to speak more often about the effectiveness of certain members of Congress in criticizing the foreign policy of the executive. Even so, they still stopped short of asserting that any profound contradictions between the executive and legislative organs of government could arise. No one dared suggest that the House and Senate might effectively challenge the "dictatorial" powers—written or unwritten—of the President. The separation of powers, writers still insisted, was "illusory."

But a new book, called simply *Constitutional Interrelationships Be-*

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*tween the President and Congress of the USA in the Sphere of Foreign Policy** (the Soviets are not known for being concise), published just last year in the USSR, goes considerably further. At times it almost reads like a declassified Soviet document on how to exploit the American system of government. The book, in fact, may well typify a kind of analysis that has circulated among the Kremlin leadership since 1965, a form of "Kremlin Papers." Its print run, at any rate, was limited to 1,300 copies, suggesting a special readership.

Written by Yuri I. Nyporko, an academician with strong political ties with Andrei Gromyko and the entire foreign-policy establishment in Moscow, including the Central Committee's Institute of the USA and Canada, *Constitutional Interrelationships* revises the earlier view of the separation of powers, especially with regard to the executive's war-making prerogatives and the effect of congressional committees, particularly the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.† No longer is it a matter of a few "realistically-minded" congressmen and senators. Rather, according to the book, the Constitution and the practical workings of the U.S. government demonstrate clearly that "profound" (the term used in the book) tensions do exist between the legislative and executive branches of government.

In advancing his argument, Nyporko cites many Soviet authorities (Gromyko and Georgii K. Shakhnazarov, among others), but more often than not defers to the judgments of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Galbraith, Howard Zinn, M.J. Bernstein, and A.D. Sofaver. From his reading and analysis, Nyporko infers that the U.S. Constitution does provide room in the legislative branch for the maneuverings of "progressive forces"; that Lenin was right when he said that the "bourgeois parliament" must be "penetrated," that "anti-parliamentarism is an infantile disorder of Communism"; and that "realistically-minded" people in the United States, through legislative pressure, can restrain executive action with respect to "local conflicts" internationally and "national liberation struggles."

Of course, at times Nyporko pays obeisance to the traditional Communist line—as he must—but not at the expense of a certain unintended irony. Quoting Galbraith's remark, that "legislative power has no force over the Pentagon or those branches of industry who serve it," Nyporko writes that the "military-industrial complex exerts tremendous pressure on Congress." Needless to say, one wonders, then, how it happens that our defense spending has declined so drastically in recent years, as a percentage of GNP, even as Soviet defense spending has increased. And Nyporko offers Iran as the prime example of how "monopoly capitalism," in league with the Pentagon, pursues its interests through U.S. foreign policy. His book obviously predates the fall of the Shah.

Yet (in Russian, *odnako,* a conjunction Nyporko uses quite often after bowing to official Marxism-Leninism), "it must be pointed out that an intensifying struggle is now taking place between the legislative and executive branches," a breach which opened as the result of the "expensive adventure in Vietnam, the aggravation of racial and other social problems connected with the toilers' struggle for their civil rights, and many other social grievances." Obviously, as he himself states explicitly elsewhere in the book, Nyporko is referring to the "causes" which informed so much of the program of the New Left. And he can be specific about the effects:

> The Indochina war helped bring about strengthening of progressive tendencies in Congress. The law, adopted under its influence, on limiting the war-making powers [of the President] reflected the endeavors of realistically-inclined American political figures to prevent "future Vietnams" and the launching of aggressive conflicts by the United States.

According to Nyporko, the rift between the legislative and executive branches of government is helped along by capitalism itself because, and here again he deviates from the traditional line, "various strata of monopoly capitalism" display "contradictions between them as well as a competitive relationship." Of course, foreign policy is under the control of big business, yet (*odnako*):

> the sphere of foreign policy frequently lies outside the immediate field of interests of the small or medium-size businesses, who in general are oriented toward the domestic market. It is not infrequent, therefore, to find the interests of small and medium-size capitalists in conflict with those of the monopolies, for whom foreign expansion is their principal endeavor.

Moreover, the monopolists themselves are often in conflict over the conduct of American foreign policy: Depending on their interests, some "may exert pressure on the White House, others upon Congress." The result: "tensions arise within the bourgeois governmental apparat with great frequency."

As to the two-party system, Nyporko finds that the "progressive anti-war struggle" greatly reduced the effect of bipartisanship in foreign policy. "Bi-partisanship," he notes, "by no means rules out difficulties arising between the executive and legislative

* *Konstitutsionniye Vzaimootnosheniya Prezidenta i Kongressa SShA v Oblasti Vneshnei Politiki.*

† Senator Fulbright, for instance, the committee's chairman from 1959 to 1975, is called "one of the most realistically-minded figures in the USA."

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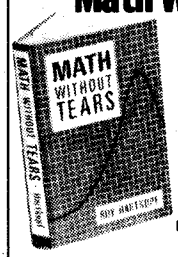

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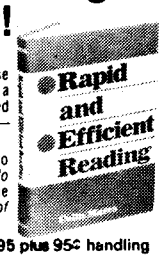

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organs over the methods and direction of foreign policy." Everything here, he continues, "depends on precisely which forces within the ruling circles control the government."

It is not hard to imagine which forces Nyporko would prefer to see presiding. Although there may be "no difference in principle" between the two parties, because they both support some degree of capitalism, "they nevertheless wage a sharp struggle with each other for the right to influence domestic and foreign policy." In his analysis of the divisions within the Democratic Party, he suggests, relying heavily on American analysts, that "struggles" between Congress and the President are especially helped by certain Democratic deviations, most of which are dovish as well as anti-executive. Far more Democrats than Republicans are singled out as spokesmen for "progressive forces."

And while Democrats in Congress may oppose a Democratic President, a more useful situation, Nyporko suggests, is one in which a Congress predominantly of one party deters a President from the opposition party. Not surprisingly, he would prefer to see a Republican President elected in 1980, along with a Democratic Congress. Nyporko's paradigm is the Nixon presidency, the checks-and-balances tension of which he calls "unprecedented." "From 1969 to 1973," he gleefully notes, "Congress passed 149 different resolutions reducing executive power." The conditions of "divided rule," he goes on to argue, "can only assist progressive tendencies." Even so, his first preference, of course, would be that "progressive forces" (unnamed) form their own party, under the guidance of the Communist Party USA, or work successfully within one—guess which?—of the two American political parties. (As Nyporko puts it, the "more liberal one.") Perhaps Barry Commoner's "Citizen's Party," formed since the book was written, fits the bill.

The important thing about all of this is that analyses like Nyporko's do have an effect on Soviet foreign policy. Clearly the Kremlin is aware, as Nyporko reveals, of the potentially great power of the American President; but it also sees, and rather counts on, the weakening of executive power as a result of congressional overreaction to, among other things, the "mistaken" Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the Vietnam war, and Watergate. It is not hard to see how something like the invasion of Afghanistan might follow from that. □

CORRESPONDENCE

Podhoretz vs. Horner

Since its release, *Kramer vs. Kramer* has bounced Carter and Kennedy, the Ayatollah, and the imminent Third World War from dinner-party conversation in the city where I live—which is Washington, no less, where movies are only "culture," and not usually in the same league with politics for serious social discourse. It's as if the case of Ted vs. Joanna were under consideration by the Supreme Court. This says something for the film as political event, not drama—an understanding of its significance John Podhoretz demonstrates in his review ("The Talkies," January 1980).

I share in Mr. Podhoretz's criticism of those who employ the women's movement ideology as a cover for selfishness and irresponsibility. However, I find in myself and among friends who share this general criticism surprisingly strong support for *Joanna*. I say "surprisingly," because no reviews I have seen construe the movie as primarily a sympathetic portrait of *her*. Given her jargonized lines, and given the fact that her act of desertion is undermotivated (whether by script defect or "really" is, I believe, not possible to say—a major flaw in the film), a sympathetic response is necessarily a political, not a dramatic, reaction.

Against Mr. Podhoretz's conclusion that the film—or the story itself "outside" the film—presents a partial and overdue indictment of a liberated woman as "a cop-out artist who has failed to hack it in what is the most taxing and important job there is," I have heard raised, and have raised myself, the following questions:

1. If Joanna *is* seriously more culpable than Ted, does that imply, as Mr. Podhoretz concludes, that the ideology she uses to make good her escape from an imagined sense of injury exists for, and is promoted primarily for, that purpose? If an ascendant ideology can be abused, to what extent does that discredit the ideology? This is not a simple question to answer.

2. Because of Joanna's desertion, which represents to Mr. Podhoretz "the flight of privileged American women from their natural responsibility," Ted "must become a mother to the kid to whom he is already an affectionate father." Where affectionate? *In pecto*? We see no evidence of his affection before her flight. Joanna's "natural responsibility"? What is Ted's natural responsibility? His involvement in career extends well beyond the responsibility of family support. He is significantly responsible to self and ambition, as Joanna has not been during the five-year period encompassing toilet training, shoelace tying, and the guidance which has made Billy a good, sensitive, loving, and brave child. Billy is not the product of what Mr. Podhoretz calls a "lousy mother." Ted himself, in the courtroom scene, indicates he does not consider her a failure.

3. Mr. Podhoretz asks why Joanna did not take Billy with her, if she loved him. Her desertion is inexcusable, but... If she *had* taken him, or had continued to take *full* responsibility for him at home, within the marriage, she would have fared about as well as Ted did, when *he* took charge. Worse, probably, since she had to *start* a career. Like Ted, she would have lost jobs and taken salary reductions. There would have been for her only what she got at home before her flight: no praise, no promotions, no victories over competitors. We live in a productively competitive society, where a chief source of joy is work well-done, and recognized as such. Those who cherish meritocracy must acknowledge that to exclude women from its rewards (and its pains) is to create a climate in which many women reject the value of the competitive and productive ethic as a way of preserving a sense of their own importance. Worse, they are teaching their children to reject it too.

4. Is not Ted's act of heroism—handling job and home alone—the permanent and unpraised condition of millions of divorced women?

5. Ted's isolation from his family before Joanna left was *his* form of desertion. Mr. Podhoretz says that the "Sisterhood" has made desertion by mothers "acceptable and even

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laudable." There is, unfortunately, some truth in what he says. Even so, it must be admitted that there exists an older, stronger brotherhood which justifies Ted's style of desertion and which is only now being examined for immoderation.

Desertion of a child is, always and everywhere, impermissible. But, discounting for dramatic exaggeration, is it not possible that, over the long haul, Joanna did all three of them a favor?

Constance Horner
Washington, D.C.

John Podhoretz replies:

It is plug-in-your-own ideology time at the movies. Mrs. Horner's letter further convinces me that *Kramer vs. Kramer* is the decade's great cinematic litmus test. *Time* magazine and most of the other critics share Mrs. Horner's view of Ted Kramer before the fact: that Ted was a stranger to his son until circumstances bound them together. I, for one, do not believe this, in spite of the convenience of the theory, and even in spite of the movie itself, which talks a lot about Ted's workaholic nature. Nonetheless, the first scene between father and son, in which Ted incompetently makes breakfast for the two of them, gave me the impression of an "affectionate" and good-natured father. Later on, Ted does yell at Billy for spilling Hawaiian Punch on some of his worksheets; this scene appears to be set up in order to demonstrate Ted's insensitiveness, but he actually comes off rather well. After all, Billy did know that he wasn't supposed to drink the punch in the living room.

I am frankly perplexed by Mrs. Horner's sympathetic evaluation of Joanna. There can be no defense for the desertion of a child—not worries about career, money, or health. Joanna is Billy's mother. If she leaves him behind, it is he who is the real cause of the desertion. Despite the talk of the last ten years, women who abdicate their motherhood can receive no valid defense. This is why the movie weakens when it attempts to give Joanna's side of the story; all it can do is rail verbally against Ted, because it cannot face, or measure up to, the indefensible. In real art, such an act can be explained and the person who commits it can even be viewed sympathetically and understandingly: Anna Karenina is the supreme example of this, and a very fitting one in this instance. Robert Benton, *Kramer vs. Kramer*'s writer/director, simply chickens out when he meets the real challenge. If he had faced it and struggled with it, *Kramer vs. Kramer* might well have made the extraordinarily unpretentious and rare leap into greatness to which too many movies pretentiously aspire.

And finally, the ascendant ideology that is women's liberation has not been abused by a type like Joanna. It has merely been comprehended, internalized, and acted out to its logical letter.

Strategic Mite?

In his article, "The Seven Lessons of SALT" (December 1979), Kenneth Adelman recognizes the futility of endeavoring to place substantive, bilateral constraints on arms growth and notes that the value of SALT treaties may lie ultimately with the pressure they exert periodically to subject America's defense posture to public review. Unfortunately, Adelman fails to capitalize on this opportunity to make a genuine contribution to the debate on the fundamental assumptions underlying U.S. strategic doctrine, offering in its place a simplistic analysis of U.S. military capabilities and the standard right-wing elixir for America's "dangerous" military decline: massive across-the-board increases in defense spending and the deployment of every new weapons system the Pentagon manages to concoct.

While it was hoped that SALT II would raise critical questions about the direction of U.S. defense policy and the Soviet strategic threat, the debate has centered around budget numbers, percentage changes in nuclear inventories, and the precise date on which the Russians will acquire strategic "superiority." Instead of giving the general public greater insight into the theoretical framework within which this obsessive preoccupation with nuclear "inferiority" is justified, writers like Adelman have obscured this deeper issue and have concentrated chiefly on "setting into motion pressures which, over time, [will] redress the strategic imbalance," the nature of which they never bother to define.

Adelman's first "lesson" is that "U.S. strategic might is dwindling mightily." What exactly is meant by this is unclear. No attempt whatsoever is made to define such terms. The question therefore becomes: By what standards is strategic might measured and on what grounds could it be said that it is dwindling? No reply is forthcoming.

Instead of providing an explanation, Adelman proudly asserts that SALT II has permitted defense-minded individuals like himself to "awaken Americans from their torpor to the coming strategic inferiority." The apocalyptic tone of this pronouncement is matched only by the

MAD AT THE MEDIA?

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imagery it is meant to conjure of the dissolution of our strategic deterrent, a caricature of which is displayed on the next page for those who do not immediately acknowledge the gravity of the situation. It is a picture of a soldier emasculated to the point where only his skeletal structure remains.

While not conducive to a serious examination of the realities of strategic power, these promotional methods do serve a useful purpose, as the second "lesson" soon reveals.

Adelman prescribes the time-honored conservative remedy of across-the-board increases in defense appropriations. This recommendation is based on the observations that the "U.S. is falling behind the Soviet Union militarily," which is "nothing new," and that, more importantly, "the U.S. is *seen* as falling behind militarily." He then goes on to make expenditure comparisons of both superpowers which supposedly lend validity to his initial claim that Western strategic might is in jeopardy and that the Soviets will soon achieve global supremacy unless measures are taken to prevent the U.S. from continuing to "disarm itself."

While it should be evident that such simple comparisons do not in themselves constitute sufficient grounds for examining the relative strengths and weaknesses of American and Soviet defense postures, Adelman acknowledges the considerable political utility of stressing these differences when discussing the issue publicly.

The value of this simple yet extremely effective tactic has not gone unnoticed. Adelman is pleased to note that "only one-tenth of the public now considers the U.S. militarily superior to the USSR while one-half believes the Russians have forged ahead."

In the absence of a critique of the doctrinal foundation on which U.S. deterrent strategy is based and sufficient proof of the vulnerability of existing weapons systems, Adelman's concerns about the destabilization of the strategic balance simply remain unjustified. To insist as he does that the Soviets will soon acquire "superiority" in the strategic realm without adequately explaining what it means, and then to reveal how easily the public can be manipulated into sharing the same perception, is intellectually dishonest.

So confident is Adelman in his argument for the continued escalation of strategic force levels that at one point he ventures so far as to say that in the recent past, "the U.S. was disarming itself so fast that nothing new was left to propose to the UN disarmament crowd," a reference to President Carter's decision to forestall development of the B-1 bomber, MX missile system, and Trident submarine programs.

Think of it! Throughout our global military empire are poised thousands of warheads capable of literally incinerating the Soviet Union should it attempt a preemptive first strike. Yet to question the desirability of deploying still more atomic weapons is to be roundly dismissed by Adelman as either a guilt-ridden Soviet sympathizer seeking to "balance the power of the United States," a "coward... motivated by the fear of not looking sufficiently progressive," or a "guru of the state, church, and academia" who still clings to "fashionable canons." No allowance is made for critics intent on exposing the suppositions underlying his reasoning for thorough inspection.

Adelman is dishonest with himself in refusing critically to examine his theoretical assumptions and dishonest with his reading audience in not making those assumptions explicit. He does not define his terms and takes pride in manipulating the opin-

(*continued on page 39*)

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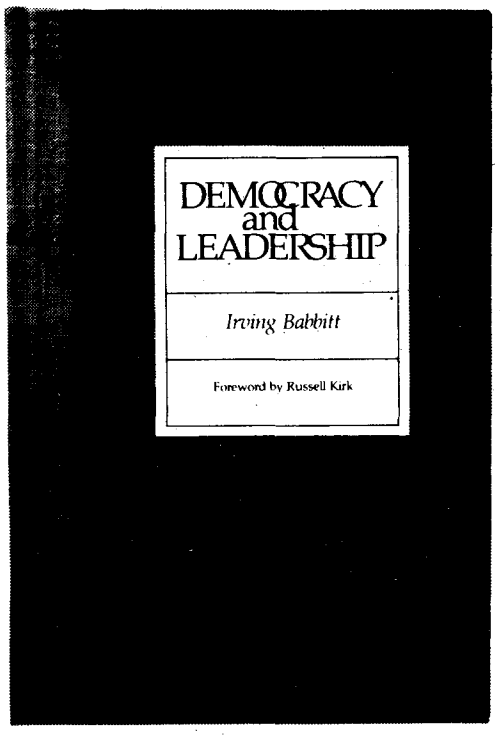

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CURRENT WISDOM

Harper's

A Mr. William Rodgers speaks his mind, as dogs howl in the night, garbage cans tip over and roll clamorously and idiotically through empty alleyways; sirens are heard, fire breaks out in the attic, there is an explosion down below, and still Mr. William Rodgers speaks of Alger, about whom Mr. Allen Weinstein has written a book titled, simply, *Perjury*:

One of the people honored and admired by those whom I have known for a generation bears a name that for years was a metaphor for malevolence and the sound of serpents. He has endured a prolonged injustice that was born in passions, sustained by fears, and aged by indifference. His name, Alger Hiss, still stirs deep forebodings in some....the non-heroes of our time have won: notably Richard Nixon, whose entire political career was taprooted to inflaming domestic fears of a nearly nonexistent American defection to Communism. Then, too, among the more odious victors was the celebrated superpatriot, and patron saint of law enforcement, J. Edgar Hoover, who died peacefully in his sleep in 1971 without ever having to answer for the humiliation, anxiety, violated rights, and deaths he and his agents inflicted on heaven knows how many citizens. It took Watergate, Spiro Agnew, corporate corruption on a worldwide scale, the Pentagon Papers, and the Vietnam war to open the taps of vindication. Then it required....

[*March 1980*]

The New York Times Book Review

Mr. Paul Cowan, author of *The Making of an Un-American,* reviews a flawed masterpiece, which, nonetheless, is essential reading for the earnest intellectualoid:

If there were a truth-in-packaging law for books, Edmund White's "States of Desire" would violate it. For he subtitles his book "Travels in Gay America" but rarely mentions lesbians, or settled homosexual couples....

[*February 3, 1980*]

The New York Post

Stirring news of Marlon Brando leaping to the cause of sorely oppressed amphibia:

Superstar Marlon Brando, who commands upwards of $2 million per picture, has agreed to put in some free time on his latest flick if the producer adds a scene featuring Brando and a drowning frog.

Brando presented the offer to Steve Shagan, producer (and writer) of *The Formula* as he completed an 11-day shooting assignment on the set.

The corpulent actor, who's drawing $2.7 million for the part, asked Shagan to create a scene in which Brando's character—a money-hungry tycoon—rescues the drowning frog from a swimming pool.

Brando, who feels the scene would convey a strong ecological message, will work two extra days, at no pay, if Shagan agrees to the new scene.

[*January 22, 1980*]

The New York Review of Books

Dr. Graham Hughes, professor of law, introduces readers to another one of those novel points of the Liberal Mysteries:

The charge that we coddle criminals and neglect victims is often heard as a cry from the hysterical right but it embodies a substantial, if distorted, truth. Criminals do get a lot more attention than their victims for many reasons. First, victims frighten us.

[*March 6, 1980*]

The New York Times

Dr. George Yaney, professor of history at the University of Maryland, dares to speak out on behalf of freedom, justice, and the Soviet way:

To the Editor:

Your coverage of recent events in Afghanistan rests entirely on the presumption that the U.S.S.R. is endangering world peace by violating Afghanistan's sovereignty. Conversely, your reporters and editorial writers assume world peace to be equivalent to the preservation of national sovereignty.

But surely national sovereignty is a dead idea. World peace demands international management, not national independence. If Soviet leaders have found an effective way to intervene in the squalid little sheikdoms and shahdoms along the Soviet Union's southern border, we should congratulate them, for it is our work they are doing. Is it not obvious by now that world management requires the effective use of power? And is it not equally obvious that the Soviet Union is the only country in the world possessing both the means and the will to exercise power?

No one can doubt that the U.S. possesses power. So do Japan, Germany and other modern democracies. But no statesman in these "free" nations has the stomach or imagination to exercise power in any cause broader than the defense of his country's own boundaries. Only Russia seems to comprehend that the world must be managed....

This is not to say that modern democracies have no function in the world. We are very good at rhetoric, and we should continue to supply the world with words and dreams. We are also good at running markets and factories. No one can match us in quality control and the interchangeability of parts.

When it comes to the exercise of power, however, we are well advised to wash our hands of the matter. Thus far, our contribution to world peace consists largely of inept dictators, demagogues and kings who use our money to equip armies they cannot control. We have labeled this state of affairs "freedom" and "national sovereignty," which, in our quaint effrontery, we equate with world peace.

Consider, by contrast, the area for which Russia has assumed responsibility. Life there is far from perfect, but peace they have. Hungarians are not killing Rumanians; Azerbaijani are not butchering Armenians; Moslems are not massacring infidels. Russians do their work crudely, but they do their work. Who are we to condemn them?

Before our illustrious President undertakes to lecture the Russians on the finer points of Jefferson's shabby philosophy, let him ask who it was, after all, who saved Europe and the world from Napoleon and Hitler.

[*January 23, 1980*]

Mother Jones

More gaseous *pensées* from the estimable Doctor Drummond, M.D. What follows is not to be read near an open flame or in the presence of those suffering emphysema or vasomotor rhinitis:

The work of men is so filled with soiling and the smearing of blood that it presumes the eventual cleaning up and caretaking by women, even as it denigrates those "feminine" functions. It was rational and humane to evacuate pregnant women and young children from the Three Mile Island vicinity, but we shouldn't necessarily ascribe these qualities to the officials there—since it would have been rational and humane to evacuate everyone. No, I suspect that the men assigned to "fix it" were eager to banish the generative presence of humanity from the workplace where such a monstrosity could be created. Behind those solemn faces under their hard hats was a childlike glee at being able to play without any mommies around, for a while.

[*February/March 1980*]

Publishers Weekly

The courageous and eloquent bull of a nascent Flaubert up from the locker room:

PUBLISHERS/EDITORS. I have read nearly 1000 reviews of adult fiction during the past two years. All but one had as the underlying theme of the work: heterosexuality; the status quo as norm; and mainstream society representative of reality. In short, all adult fiction published in the past two years was written in the same old way about the same old stuff, with only slight variations on a theme. My agent has been circulating my novel on women & sports for the past few months with no takes. The work is witty, humorous, very Feminist, revealing of the life-style of women athletes, clearly not representative of one kind of status quo reality, and written with a zest that is typical of women athletes. Why this ad? To pose the question: Is the sole responsibility of publishers to sustain so-called norms and status quo behavior in literature and to not permit any other type of same on the market? From my observations that seems to be true. To date, no adult fiction on women & sports and their life-style appears on the market. Friends said I was crazy to place this ad. I said, maybe there is at least one publisher willing to take on a novel on women & sports, clearly not representative of the same old stuff, written in the same old way, and take the responsibility as well as offering the public something else to read. Requests for completed manuscript on women & sports may be had by telephoning (203) 226-4560.

[*February 8, 1980*]

Esquire

A report on the astounding treachery of America's infamous elites from Mr. Richard Reeves, legendary sociologist:

You see signs in the lives of young black males that America has reached a consensus on the unreachable and that narcotics are part of an unspoken policy of psychological genocide—an effective tactic when combined with colonialist tricks like finding and co-opting potentially dangerous young leadership, getting them to Harvard or the state assembly before they foment rebellion.

[*November 1979*]

The United States Senate

Senators S.I. Hayakawa and Alan Cranston send an urgent "Dear Colleague" letter containing much useful information for the lively bodies of our government's upper house:

Dear Colleague:

We wish to inform you of the VD NATIONAL HOTLINE, sponsored by the American Social Health Association. This HOTLINE is the only round-the-clock VD information and referral service providing toll-free epidemic intervention to callers from the 48 continental states. The American Social Health Association, located in California, is the only national voluntary health organization which deals strictly with venereal disease research, education, prevention, and control.

[*February 1, 1980*]

The Environmental Defense Letter

The redoubtable newsletter of the Environmental Defense Fund provides vigilant nature lovers with still more evidence that even when the EDF has no idea what it is doing it is doing good:

The snail darter's fate is still unclear. Though completing the [Tellico] dam will destroy the fish in the Little Tennessee River, its only natural habitat, populations transplanted to other nearby rivers still survive. If they become successfully established, the key to their survival may well have been EDF's own lawsuit against Tellico Dam in the early 1970's, before discovery of the snail darter or passage of the Endangered Species Act. Had EDF's suit not delayed construction originally, the snail darter might have become extinct before anyone knew it existed.

[*November/December 1979*]

The New York Times

A brief biographical note on one of the United States Congress's most revered statesmen, the Hon. Michael O. Myers:

Mr. Myers had one brush with the law after being elected to Congress the second time. He pleaded "no contest" to charges that he beat a waitress and a security guard at an Arlington, Va., motel. Mr. Myers had been at a party after swearing-in ceremonies and was wearing a gorilla mask at the time.

[*February 7, 1980*]

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(continued from page 36)

ion of those easily misled by such sophistry. Those who remain unconvinced are simply laughed at.

Adelman may be correct when intimating that the SALT II treaty may be the best thing ever to happen to American foreign policy. It has inevitably become the focal point for jingoist extremists who have seized the political initiative and now hold the treaty hostage. By delaying ratification, congressional hawks hope to extract commitments from the administration and the rest of Congress to reverse America's ominous military "decline" and renew the quest for global supremacy.

We may safely conclude that any attempt at arms control which is unsuccessful at restraining arms growth will ultimately be exploited by militarists who would move the country toward the brink of nuclear confrontation by capitalizing on the political straits of politicians for whom the symbolic aspects of a SALT treaty yield considerable utility.

Mark D. Travis
Denver, Colorado

Kenneth Adelman replies:

Where to begin? So much has happened since Mr. Travis composed his letter. For one thing, President Carter has used the "standard right-wing elixir for America's 'dangerous' military decline" to call (Dec. 12) for an average 4.5 percent real annual defense increase over the next five years and more than 5 percent real boost next year. He may go even higher after Afghanistan and before the complete budget is announced. For another, the President has joined us "jingoist extremists" who "now hold the treaty hostage." No SALT II for a while, he told the Senate and the nation. Not a peep of opposition has been heard on either the defense boosts or the shelving of SALT II. To me, we're in the fine position of having SALT's lessons without its provisions (legally, at least).

A note of confession on Mr. Travis' charge of my mentioning some "gurus" to be "simply laughed at." One so mentioned, William Sloane Coffin, headed to Iran for Christmas, after the article was published, saying he could not understand the American public's hurry in getting the hostages released and comparing President Carter's sanctions against Iran to President Johnson's bombings of North Vietnam. Such statements are no laughing matter. The Reverend should be held up to more than scorn. No wonder the "students" at the U.S. Embassy in Teheran have such disdain for the U.S. after greeting the Rev. Coffin as the emissary from the Left and Rep. George Hansen from the Right.

A small clarification: The measures of strategic power need not be specified in this type of popular article but are readily available in the Secretary of Defense's past two *Posture Statements* (Charts 1A-1) which come to the conclusion I presented. Greater detail is contained in a 1978 study for the Defense Nuclear Agency, which found the Soviets ahead in 33 of the 41 measures of strategic power.

A larger clarification: The "fundamental assumptions underlying U.S. strategic doctrine" have been bound up in the MAD doctrine of "mutual assured destruction." This holds as the goal of strategic weapons to assure an unacceptable level of damage to the opponent in a retaliatory second strike. This is a fine doctrine except for one small factor: The Soviets have never bought it, as seen by their large and redundant air and civil defense systems and their relentless ICBM buildup. It would be guileless to expect the Soviet Union to be the first nation in history to achieve military superiority and not try to exploit it for political if not military purposes.

I surmise Mr. Carter has now come to that realization and I hope that Mr. Travis has as well.

The Spy Who Came In For a Scold

I hope you will permit me to disagree with Karl O'Lessker's lengthy review of the allegedly "brilliant" novels by John le Carré ("Le Carré's People," March 1980). Last summer I was kindly invited by some friends to spend a few days by the seashore. One day it poured with rain and so I retired to my room with the copy of *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* that was lying around the house. Everyone seemed to be saying that it was wonderful. I should say that I was at that time immersed in welfare research, and had even brought with me some government welfare proceedings (just in case, so to speak). But I imagined, as I stretched out on my bed, that le Carré would make for welcome relief.

How wrong I was! Within an hour or so, I realized I didn't have much idea what was going on in Smileyland or why, or who was saying what to whom. After another hour I was totally in the dark, and eventually I threw down the book in disgust, turning to my welfare documents with renewed enthusiasm. I found the bureaucratic prose to be a model of lucidity compared with le Carré.

The British press has been somewhat less enthusiastic about le Carré lately. "A dull dog is Smiley, waddling introspectively at your heels for 327 solemn pages," Richard Barkley wrote of *Smiley's People* in the *Sunday Express*. Richard Ingrams noted in the *Spectator*: "The poor fellow has completely lost his touch and can no longer write clearly."

The main trouble with le Carré's books, when all is said and done, is that they are so boring to read. All the action seems to take place offstage, for one thing. Does this make it great literature? I have my doubts. The life of the spy may indeed be dull, as le Carré wants us to know, but art shouldn't mirror life all *that* faithfully.

Tom Bethell
Washington, D.C.

Perverse Toryism

I have come across what I consider to be a classic definition of "neoconservatism" which I thought that you might enjoy. Besides being poetic, it proves that "neoconservatism" is not new at all, but has been a historical companion/antidote to all progressive follies. Speaking of Jonathan Swift in "Politics vs. Literature," George Orwell writes:

> Politically, Swift was one of those people who are driven into a sort of perverse Toryism by the follies of the progressive party of the moment.

F.L. Morton
Worcester, Massachusetts

Nuke the Novelist

The megaton of literary criticism over Norman Mailer in the pages of the February *American Spectator* leaves me wondering what remains. Seems that the writing of *The Executioner's Song* brought this forgotten target into range. If nothing else, Mailer may go down in the history of literature as the hack who was atomized by the greatest critical blast of the nuclear age.

Risto Marttinen
Falls Church, Virginia

Give Me Solar or Give Me Death

According to Joseph Shattan ("The No-Nuke Wind Ensemble," March 1980), people who oppose nuclear power don't like America—apparently because they'd prefer to see American citizens alive and healthy instead of riddled with bent chromosomes or cooked alive like meatloaf in a microwave oven. I for one believe it when the Right says it will defend America to the death: your death, and mine—ours.

Samuel Putz
Schenectady, New York

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Why Not The Worst?

Tyrrell's Prose and High Moral Character Judged by Readers Across America

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.'s writing—in *The American Spectator, Harper's, Commentary,* the *New York Times, Newsweek,* and in *Public Nuisances*—always elicits admiring and courteous responses from the *crème de la crème* of American intellectualoids. Hundreds of letters have poured in throughout the year. Here is a sampling of some of the most thoughtful:

"**I am appalled...**" Bridgeport, Conn. "...a new low in journalism." Boulder, Colo. "I do not worry about the Emmett Tyrrells of the world. The gutters are crawling with them." Jenkintown, Penn. "...the lowest kind of **journalistic prostitution.**" Calgary, Alberta, Canada. "...**disgusting falsehoods** and venomous generalizations..." Buffalo, N.Y. "...extremely **infantile and vulgar.**" Kokomo, Ind.

"**I am appalled...**" Annandale, Va. "Mr. Tyrrell's article illustrates everything that we at the university so passionately reject." Edwardsville, Ill. "...**a piece of trash.**" Buffalo, N.Y. "...uses language in an **irresponsible and dangerous** manner." Evanston, Ill. "The article is not only **outrageous.** It frightens me." Washington, D.C. "...**an exercise in bad taste.**" Toledo, Ohio. "...neither amusing nor intelligent." Washington, D.C. "...**flagrantly ignorant...**" Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

"**I am appalled...**" Bozeman, Mont. "Where does Mr. Tyrrell get his knowledge? From old movies?" Pontiac, Mich. "...**viciously biased...**" Lincoln, Neb. "...**juvenile stereotyping.**" Akron, Ohio. "...without purpose and **an insult to minimal intelligence.**" Venice, Cal. "I simply could not believe my eyes." Oxford, Penn. "...**ugly...**" Worcester, Mass.

Such thoughtful comments suggest that *The American Spectator* is unlikely to become required reading for the sensitive and idealistic of the Republic.

After all, *The American Spectator* obstinately defends and admires such quaint values as freedom, democracy, and excellence.

The American Spectator is unfashionably skeptical of such trendy piffles as women's liberation, reform politicians, Ralph Nader, hygiene of any kind, and singles bars.

And *The American Spectator*'s editor revels in treating venerable world leaders with puckish irreverence. President Carter, for example, "remains adamant in going by the first name of a little boy," and Mao Tse-tung was, in Tyrrell's eyes, "the pudgiest revolutionary of the century...a plump little butterball."

If you are an aspiring intellectualoid, *The American Spectator* is poison. Stick with *Rolling Stone* or *Ontology Today.* But if you hold to *complicated* views of the world that bustles beyond your nose, if you delight in forming your own opinions, and if you want to know what some of the best writers in America are saying to discomfit some of the most preposterous lightweights, read *The American Spectator,* the magazine that appalls.

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